SERMON PLANS

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A.M.D.G.

SERMON PLANS:

BEING

FOUR OUTLINES OF SERMONS,

Chiefly on the Epistles and Gospels,

FOR

EACH SUNDAY AND HOLIDAY OF THE YEAR.

BY

REV. GEO. EDW. HOWE,

AUTHOR OF THE "CATECHIST."

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PREFACE.

THE favourable reception given to the "Catechist" a few years ago led the writer to think, that possibly a collection of plans for Sermons on the same lines might not be unacceptable, while a number of correspondents who took an interest in the former also suggested the latter: hence the present volume.

No doubt, each priest has his own method of putting his subject before his people, and any other may prove awkward for him. Too much, therefore, must not be expected from such a work as this. Failures among sermon books are notorious; yet, may it not sometimes be that the failure lies rather with the users than with the authors of such books?

In spite of this danger, however, the writer ventures to put forth this further effort to aid his brother priests, who have not always much time for preparation, and especially the younger and inexperienced among them, by laying before them outlines of sermons drawn up ready to hand.

The principle followed has been, first of all, to give a brief introduction, and then to present two or

three leading thoughts on the subject chosen; under each of these main points, subdivisions are given, so as to present to the mind an orderly scheme of development on the Virtue, the Vice, or the Truth in question, containing references to Holy Scripture, along with examples therefrom, as well as from the lives of the Saints, thus forming a series of suggestions for the preacher. Some of them may be found more lengthy than is always expedient for a single discourse; but each one can take that only which suits him best, clothing and developing the thoughts according to circumstances.

In order that the eye may assist the mind, each sermon is so printed in its various types, etc. on two pages facing each other,* that its plan and contents may be seen entire at a glance, without the interruption caused by turning over a leaf.

Some deprecate the practice of announcing the divisions of a sermon to the people. Yet, if the chief points, two or three at most, are made known at the beginning, will this not aid the hearers in following more easily? and will not such a practice help to keep the speaker to the point, and to avoid his wandering into generalities? It is the old-fashioned custom, and must enable the audience to follow more methodically, and then, to remember more easily what has been said.

To make ourselves clear to others, we must have

* Owing to this, it was found necessary, during the process of printing, to curtail somewhat a few of the *Plans*.

clear ideas in our own minds, otherwise we are apt to become inaccurate, faulty in memory, then confused; hence the chartlike form in which these *Plans* are presented, as more likely to fix them in the memory. Yet no outline of thoughts will be of much use to a preacher, unless he first make them his own by impressing his own mind upon them. Ideas are more easy to remember than words; if the former, as here presented, are made to sink into the mind, words will hardly fail to follow. The chief hindrance to facility of speech is the want of thinking. We are apt to appropriate other men's thoughts by the memory only, instead of making them our own, through meditation and study; and the people are not slow to feel whether a preacher is speaking as from himself, or only through his lips.

Every true sermon is intended to effect some good, and not merely to be listened to; it will fail of its purpose, unless it make some truth more clear and certain to those who hear it, or explain and enforce some duty. To this end, the priest must be in earnest, and make the matter his own by careful thought and preparation. Unless he prepare beforehand what he wishes to say, he will throw out statements at random, and utter propositions that are inexact, perhaps even erroneous, while he may easily wander into three or four different subjects, to the great bewilderment and weariness of the people.

These *Plans* are designed to aid the preacher in keeping before his mind the chief ideas of his subject, which he must think out for himself, and then develop in suitable expression. Thus they will not relieve him of all preparation, when he has time and opportunity for it, but may give him much assistance in his labour. It has been truly said, that the more it costs the preacher to prepare, the less it costs the audience to listen, and *vice versa.* This should indeed be a spur to action. It is hoped the *Plans*, with their divisions and texts and illustrations, may be a help towards avoiding emptiness of thought and matter, or verbosity in expression. Some of them may perhaps seem commonplace in subject or design ; yet in this country, we require simple and earnest instruction, "the studiousness of a simple and apostolic preaching," as Father Faber puts it, and much that may seem commonplace may be of extreme practical importance.

S. Ignatius is said to have had a horror of long sermons ; these sketches are intended to occupy perhaps some twenty or twenty-five minutes, which will usually be found enough for a morning service.

It is well to take generally a low estimate of the intelligence and knowledge of our audience ; this will guard us against speaking over their heads, make us aim at simplicity of thought and diction, and lead us to repeat our explanations, if necessary, the better to secure their reception.

At the foot of many of the *Plans*, an example, a

comparison, or a fact from the lives of the Saints is given, by way of putting into concrete form the lesson referred to in the text. It is exceedingly desirable to adopt such a practice for every instruction, where possible, giving the example a reasonable development. This serves to lighten the subject, to rivet attention, and to impress our teaching on the mind. This was one of the features in the discourses of S. Gregory the Great — an endless store of examples. If these can sometimes be taken from local circumstances, they will be all the more pleasing and effective.

It is not sufficient to leave the instruction to produce its own fruit, and it is a mistake to trust to hearts and consciences to make the application of what has been said. *We* must endeavour to do this, putting the lesson into definite form for use in daily life. Hence, at the end of each plan, two or three practical lessons are suggested, of which one or more may be given by way of conclusion to the sermon. They will help to concentrate and sum up what has been said, and serve as the spiritual nosegay which, holy writers suggest, we should always bring away from our meditations.

It is well to especially prepare the opening sentence or two of a discourse, and still more to make sure of an effective close; the former will give confidence to the speaker, by making a good beginning, while the latter will leave a good impression on his hearers. Some speakers find themselves in the

greatest difficulty to hit upon a satisfactory sentence to finish with, and they are painful to listen to as they beat about the bush for a natural and simple ending: a little previous thought will spare us such a trial.

If we take this ordinary care with our sermons and instructions, with prayer to God for the divine blessing on our work, our labour herein can hardly fail to produce good fruit in men's souls.

The present work does not profess to put forth original ideas on the part of the writer; they are but notes and analyses of the writings of others, preachers or commentators, gathered together and put into shape, and no attempt can be made to indicate the many sources whence they have been drawn. At first, it was intended to give further sketches, suitable to a number of Feasts throughout the year. This was afterwards found to make the book too long and too bulky, and the idea was abandoned; hence the present volume contains *Plans* for the Sundays and Holidays only. By changing the text and modifying the introductory remarks accordingly, the plan set down for one occasion may sometimes be found suitable for another also.

If the hopes and ideas here expressed come to anything like realization, and the Clergy are in any way assisted thereby in their arduous and responsible duty of preaching the Word, the labour bestowed on this volume will not have been in vain. for thus will

it serve to spread the knowledge and love of Religion, which now more than ever are necessary to our People.

G. E. H.

Tynemouth,
November, 1903.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE CATECHIST:

OR

Headings and Suggestions

FOR THE

EXPLANATION

OF

THE CATECHISM OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE,

WITH QUOTATIONS AND EXAMPLES FROM SCRIPTURE,

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SERMON PLANS.

I.

ON THE EPISTLES.

1. WORK FOR ADVENT.

"It is now the hour to rise from sleep." Rom. xiii. 11.

i. To-day begins a new ecclesiastical year.
ii. The four weeks of Advent are a time of preparation for Christmas, as God took some 4,000 years to prepare men for the Messiah.
iii. Consider the words of the Epistle, this time of consideration.

Rise from sleep:

i. Sleep of the soul is the neglect of the things of God.
ii. In the past we have perhaps been remiss: for,
  a. We are all prone to fall from our first fervour.
  b. We all need to be roused to redoubled piety.
iii. It is well therefore to examine the past: *e.g.*
  a. Our thoughts, words and deeds.
  b. Our spiritual duties.
  c. The duties of our state in life.
  d. The quantity and quality of our reading.
  e. The debts and liabilities we have incurred.
  f. Any evil habits contracted.
iv. Our sins, of whatever kind, must not discourage us. This is not the idea of the Apostle: on the contrary,
v. We must endeavour this holy season to begin again, with fresh zeal and courage.
vi. God's grace to this end will not fail, if duly sought.

Works of darkness:

i. Wicked deeds that cannot bear the light of day.
ii. Sins that bring shame, suited only to the darkness.
iii. How terrible and how frequent are such evils: *e.g.*
  The crime of Cain: Gen. iv. 8.
  The sin of Sodom and Gomorrha: Gen. xviii. 20.
  The sin of Achab: 3 Kgs. xxi.

iv. We should now pray for mercy, lest such crimes bring down God's anger on the world.

v. Even our own lesser sins are darkness before God. Advent is a time for reflection and repentance.

The armour of Light: viz.

i. *Living Faith:* shown in
   - *a.* Obedience to God's will: Mth. vii. 21.
   - *b.* Works of mercy: Mth. xxv. 40.
   - *c.* Victory over the world: 1 Jn. v. 4.

ii. *Grace:*
   - *a.* Habitual grace, the supernatural life of the soul.
   - *b.* Increased by worthy reception of the Sacraments.
   - *c.* If lost, regained by repentance.

iii. *The Christian Virtues:* e.g.
   - *a.* The Theological Virtues.
   - *b.* The Cardinal Virtues.
   - *c.* The Virtues opposed to the capital sins.

Lessons:

i. See here matter for reflection during Advent.

ii. Repent now of past sloth and indifference.

iii. Take the Apostle's advice and put on the Lord Jesus Christ.*

iv. Prepare your hearts for His coming at Christmas-time.

v. Think of the Judgment Day (to-day's Gospel), when He will again come, not in mercy, but in justice. Ecclus. vii. 40.

---

* It was this very portion of S. Paul's Epistle that S. Augustine happened one day to light upon, as he opened the Holy Scriptures, and the words made such an impression on him as led finally to his conversion to God.—*Confessions, viii.*

2. MORTAL SIN.

"Cast off the works of darkness." Rom. xiii. 12.

i. Works of darkness mean mortal sin of any kind.
ii. S. Paul here bids us to abandon sin.
iii. To avoid it in future, consider now some effects of mortal sin.

Mortal Sin: any grievous offence against the **Law** of God.

i. Kills the soul:
   a. Depriving it of its supernatural life—divine grace.
   b. Though the sinner may still appear living, working, etc.
ii. Cancels past merit:
   a. As plainly stated by the prophet Ezechiel, xviii. 24.
      Albert the Great's mechanism.*
   b. Yet when sin is pardoned, Merit probably revives.
iii. Renders us incapable of meriting meanwhile:
   a. Even miracles, without Charity, avail not for Heaven: 1 Cor. xiii. 2.
   b. Yet good works done in sin should not be omitted, for they may lead to repentance:
      The penance of Achab: 3 Kgs. xxi. 29.
      The prayer of Manasses: 2 Par. xxxiii. 13.
iv. Deserves Hell through its malice:
   a. Pain of *sense*, for the Body, in every limb.
   b. Pain of *loss*, in the Soul.
   c. All for all eternity!
v. Involves temporal punishment, even when forgiven.
vi. Yet, however great, may always receive pardon, on repentance.

Conditions, that sin may be mortal:

i. *Grave matter:* e.g.
   a. In itself: murder, large theft.
   b. In the purpose of the Law: Communion after food.
   c. In its circumstances: small theft from a poor person.

ii. *Knowledge* and advertence:
   But wilful ignorance does not excuse.

iii. *Full consent* to the act, or to the occasion of it.
   Saul at S. Stephen's death: Acts. vii. 57.

Lessons:

i. Resolve against so great an evil as mortal sin: by
   a. Daily prayer for strength.
   b. Frequent reception of the Sacraments.
   c. Resisting the beginnings of temptation.

ii. Advent is a time of prayer and meditation; hence,
   a. Think now of the terrible evil of mortal sin.
   b. Seek instruction in Christian Doctrine.

iii. Advent is also a time for penance: hence,
   a. Atone for sin by works of penance and mortification.
   b. Observe the laws of Fasting and Abstinence.
   c. Deny yourself some pleasure, even though lawful in itself.

iv. The more we enter into this spirit of Advent, the greater will be our joys and graces at Christmas-tide.

---

* Albert the Great spent thirty years in making a wonderful piece of work—a human figure, which, by means of certain contrivances, was made to speak and act as though alive. He thought to give a surprise to a friend, by showing him the mechanism in action. The latter, on seeing the figure move and speak so naturally, full of a strange fear, seized a piece of wood beside him and instantly broke the work to pieces. "Stop," cried Albert, too late. "What have you done? Thirty years have I laboured to bring that work to perfection, and in a single instant you have destroyed it!"—So does one mortal sin cancel the merits of a lifetime.

3. SPIRITUAL READING.

"What things soever were written, were written for our learning." Rom. xv. 4.

i. This text implies the duty of reading the Scriptures.
ii. Hereby is inculcated the principle of Spiritual Reading generally. A most effective aid in making our lives truly spiritual.

Importance of Spiritual Reading:

i. We all need instruction, though perhaps thinking we know enough. Hence,
   a. In the Old Law, the Scriptures were daily read in the Synagogue.
   b. In the New Law, the Epistles and Gospels are "written for our learning."
   c. S. Paul advised his disciple to read: 1 Tim. iv. 13.
ii. Spiritual Reading is listening to the voice of God Himself.
iii. The Fathers of the Church inculcate its necessity: *e.g.* S. Athanasius,* S. Jerome.†
iv. Founders of religious Orders all agree in requiring it.
v. The common practice of holy persons in the world.

Advantages:

i. We cannot at all times hear sermons, but can always read a book.
ii. Words of a sermon may pass away or escape us; but, with a book, we can pause, or read again.
iii. Books speak to all alike, without respect of persons, or fear of offence.
iv. Books give us the companionship of Saints and Doctors: whose sanctioned words have fed and formed souls to God.
v. It gives purity, tranquillity, nourishment and strength to the soul.
vi. A wonderful influence to encouragement and perseverance. Conversion of S. Ignatius: Jly. 31; and S. Augustine: Aug. 28.

Method:

i. Read slowly.
   a. Not hurriedly, like a storybook, for pleasure; but,
   b. Dwelling on parts that concern us, or affect us.
   Food does good, only when duly digested.
ii. Make an occasional ejaculation, while reading.
   Thus turning it into real prayer.
iii. Little at a time:
   a. To remember better what is read.
   b. To make practical application of it.
   c. Often the same book, if found profitable.
   S. Francis of Sales read the "Spiritual Combat" for 20 years!
iv. Above all, seek God therein, not mere information or pleasure.

Which Books?

i. Holy Scripture, especially the Epistles and Gospels.
   As so many letters from our Father, and our true Home.
   a. With a desire of spiritual progress.
   b. In the spirit of humility.
   c. In submission to the Church's interpretation.
ii. The "Imitation of Christ."
   Containing sweetness, like the manna, for every condition of soul.
iii. Books of religious Instruction.
   So necessary in these our days.
iv. Lives of the Saints and Martyrs:
   Example is the best exhortation to sluggish human nature.

Lessons:

i. Regularly, every Sunday at least, some Spiritual Reading.
ii. Procure suitable books occasionally, especially for children's sake.
iii. Lead these to adopt the practice in their early years.

---

* "You will see no one truly intent on God's service, who is not also given to reading."—*Exhort. ad Relig.*

† "Let sleep come upon you with a book in your hand, and let the Holy Scriptures receive your declining head."—*Ad Eustoch.*

4. HOPE.

"That you may abound in Hope." Rom. xv. 13.

Hope:

i. One of the theological virtues, by which the soul apprehends God.

ii. Firm trust that God will give us all things necessary to salvation, if we do what He requires of us.

iii. Virtue necessary to salvation, belonging only to this life.

a. If we do not hope, we shall not ask and shall not receive.

b. In Heaven, we do not expect, but possess and enjoy God.

Motives for Hope:

i. The COMMAND of God:

"Trust in Him, all ye congregation of people." Ps. lxi. 9.
"Have confidence in the Lord with all thy heart." Prov. iii. 5.
"Hope in thy God always." Osee xii. 2.

ii. The GOODNESS of God:

a. Who is *willing* and desirous to help.

b. Shown forth so often in the past: *e.g.*

1. Our Creation and Redemption and all spiritual Graces.
2. Temporal blessings without number.

c. A pledge therefore of mercies yet to come.

iii. The POWER of God:

a. Who is *able* to help and can do all things: Mth. xix. 26.

b. Examples of such power:

The Creation and Preservation of the Universe.
The protection of Daniel, and of the three children: Dan. vi. iii.

iv. The FIDELITY of God, who *will* help us.

"Because he hoped in Me, I will deliver him." Ps. xc. 14.
"God is faithful." 1 Cor. i. 9.

v. Our own ADVANTAGES: for, those who hope,
a. Gain greater light to see the Truth.
b. Receive special strength in trial.
Example of the ivy.*
c. Have aptitude for the gifts of Heaven.

Qualities of Hope: it must be

i. *Firm:* because of these motives.
David against Goliath: 1 Kgs. xvii. 37, 45.
Bl. Thomas More to his daughter.†
ii. *Unlimited:* in all we need for soul or body.
Our Lady, at the marriage-feast: Jn. ii. 5.
iii. *Submissive:* resigned, should God defer our petition.
Job a model of trust in God: xiii. 15.

Lessons:

i. Ask God to strengthen your Hope.
ii. Consider sometimes the grounds on which it rests.
iii. Make an act of Hope each day.
iv. In all your difficulties, appeal at once to God; for,
v. God will work within us, according to the hopes we place in Him.—*S. Bernd.*

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* Ivy naturally seeks a trunk, or a wall, to cling to and climb upwards: so human nature, poor and needing all things, seeks the protection and help of God.

† "I will never doubt the goodness of God, no matter how weak I feel. Even if through fear I were to fall, as Peter did, I would still hope in God: I would ask Him to look on me with mercy and raise me up again, to confess once more His truth."

5. JOY IN THE LORD.

"Rejoice in the Lord always." Phil. iv. 4.

i. Holy writers insist on joy in the service of God.
ii. The Saints have ever put this advice into practice.
iii. Let *us* also consider this spirit of gladness and joy.

Importance:

i. Greater than is sometimes imagined; for,
Joy of heart is no small help in Religion.
ii. Shown by frequent references in Scripture: *e.g.*
"Be glad in the Lord and rejoice. Ps. xxxi. 11.
"Serve ye the Lord with gladness." Ps. xcix. 2.
"Nothing is better than for a man to rejoice in his work." Eccles. iii. 12.
"Again I say, rejoice." Phil. iv. 4.
iii. Shown in the spirit of the Church, bidding us joy,
a. In Advent, time of penance:
Alleluia, throughout the Office.
Gaudete, Introit of the third Sunday.
b. In Lent even, the season of sorrow:
Lætare, Introit of the fourth Sunday.
c. In Funerals:
Benedicite, *Benedictus*, or *Laudate Dominum.*

Examples from the lives of the Saints:

S. Francis of Sales, in his daily life, and writings. Jan. 29.
S. Ignatius urged his disciples to gladness: Jly. 31.
S. Jerome, in the midst of his austerities: Spt. 30.
Religious who have left all things for God.
Josaphat and the Leper.*

Motives:

i. Joy is conducive to God's glory.
   a. A prince is honoured by the alacrity of his attendants.
   So is God glorified by our cheerful service.
   b. We shall obey cheerfully, if we have joy in the heart.
   c. Our joy will draw others to serve God.
ii. Joy perfects our work, and is pleasing to God.
   a. God loves a cheerful giver: 2 Cor. ix. 7.
   b. As we also do, and value the manner of a gift.
iii. Joy is a help to perseverance:
   What we undertake with gladness, we willingly continue.

Means to it:

i. Holiness of life and purity of conscience. Ecclus. i. 12.
ii. Humility and meekness. Mth. xi. 29.
iii. Resignation to the Divine Will:
   Taking all as from God's hands, we are happy.
iv. Mortification and self-denial. Mth. v. 5.

Lessons:

i. Strive after joy of heart, through these means.
ii. Pray the Holy Ghost for His spirit of Joy.
iii. Cultivate it, as a powerful aid, both in spirituals and temporals.
   A foretaste here of eternal joy hereafter.

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* Prince Josaphat, hunting in a wood, suddenly heard a voice singing sweetly, and was surprised to find it that of a leper almost dying, who said: "For forty years my soul has been confined in this body, now falling to pieces, as you see. My soul will soon be able to wing its flight to God and His kingdom, and I sing with delight, at the very thought."—*Mrs. Herbert.*

6. THE PEACE OF GOD.

"The peace of God . . . keep your hearts." Phil. iv. 7.

i. So long as evil exists and the passions last, there must be some conflict and trouble in the heart.
ii. Christ came to restore peace to the world, lost through sin.
iii. This is the peace the Apostle wishes us this day.

Peace:

i. Is reconciliation of man with *God* through Our Lord.
   a. Until He came, man was at variance with his Creator.
   b. Only the "Prince of Peace" could restore the lost friendship of God.
ii. Is harmony with our *neighbour*, through
   a. Forgiveness of injuries.
      S. Elisabeth, the great Saint of peace and reconciliation: Jly. 8.
   b. Charity in all things to all men.
      S. Ignatius and his Foundations.*
iii. Is in *oneself*, contentment of soul, through a good conscience. "Which surpasseth all understanding." Phil. iv. 7.
   a. Which the devil tries to destroy by sin; or,
   b. Endeavours to disturb by scruples and doubts; or,
   c. Seeks to undermine by the allurements of self-indulgence.
iv. Bestowed by Our Lord, through
   a. A *Lesson:* the preaching of the Cross and self-denial.
      Such doctrine sets up a stronghold in the soul's centre.

b. A *Ministration:* the sacramental system:
1. In the wide sense of Sacraments, Sacrifice and Rites.
2. The ordinary means of gaining peace which the world cannot give.

c. A *Presence:* The Sacred Heart, abode of Peace. Approached by worship and devotion.

v. Has beneficial effects:
a. Unfailing cheerfulness of mind and heart.
b. Measureless confidence in God, in all things.
c. Strength against the persecutor and tempter.
d. Courage amid temporal trials.

Dangers to Peace:

i. Temptation against the Law of God.
ii. Want of resignation to His Will.
iii. Self-opinionatedness with others.
iv. Disobedience to Superiors.
v. Pride, or anger.
vi. Envy, or avarice.
vii. Selfishness.

Lessons:

i. Strive ever to live in grace with God: for,

"Much peace have they that love thy Law." Ps. cxviii. 165.

ii. After sin, seek immediate forgiveness.
iii. In scruples or doubts, consult a prudent confessor.

Then will this three-fold peace "keep your hearts and minds."

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* When founding Colleges and Houses of his Order, S. Ignatius used to place over them Superiors taken from various nations; thus the head of the Roman College would be a Frenchman, his object being to secure that most desirable effect, peace among the different nationalities. What more wonderful than to see men from different countries so united by the observance of discipline, that there seemed only one mind among them, while their bodies seemed the instruments of the same mind, which more than anything else excited the admiration of Pope Gregory XIII.—*Lohner.*

7. HUMAN RESPECT.

"It is a very small thing to be judged by you." 1 Cor. iv. 3.

Human Respect:

i. Fear of what the world may think or say.
ii. A most fertile source of temptation and sin.
How many souls are lost through it!
iii. S. Paul emphatically declares against it, (above).
iv. Insulting to God:
a. Preference given to man's esteem rather than God's will.
1. Yet God is the fountain of all honour.
2. Any mark of His displeasure, greater than any evil.
b. As saying, at least in act,
"I would serve if convenient;" or,
"Cast me off, if only the world applaud!"
c. The blasphemy of this, if duly considered!
v. Mean and cowardly:
a. Abject servitude, to regulate moral conduct by others' opinions.
b. Some subjection is honourable: *e.g.*
1. Inferiors to superiors.
2. In matters indifferent, to refer to others.
3. Certain customs, if not against God's Law. But,
c. In matters of Faith and morals, none must intervene, except by divine authority.
Moral courage wanting, if we yield in such a case.

Occasions of fall:

i. The sign of the Cross at meal time.
ii. Observance of Friday abstinence.
iii. Saluting Priest or Church, in passing.

iv. Frequent reception of the Sacraments, even before Catholics.
v. A call to embrace the true Faith.
vi. Friends wishing us to go to dangerous places.

Overcome by:

i. The thought of God's presence.
As a soldier, under the eyes of his General.
ii. The thought of our Lord's words:

"He that shall be ashamed of Me . . . the Son of man will be ashamed of him." Mrk. viii. 38.
"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." Mth. x. 37.

iii. Prayer to the Holy Ghost for fortitude.
iv. Foreseeing the occasions of danger.

"Forewarned is forearmed."

v. Studying the conduct of the Saints:
David before Goliath: 1 Kgs. xvii.
S. Dunstan and the Nobles: May 19.
S. Gregory against the Emperor: May 25.*

Lessons:

i. Resolve against Human Respect by these means.
ii. Heed not the world, if doing God's will.
iii. Be brave in little things: one victory brings another. Fidelity in small things, then in greater. Lke.xvi.10.

* For several long years, S. Gregory VII. sustained a difficult struggle for the liberties of the Church against Henry IV. of Germany. In spite of all the remonstrances and suspicions of the world, the Pontiff boldly obeyed his conscience throughout, and finally died in exile, A.D. 1085.

8. RASH JUDGMENT.

"Judge not before the time." 1 Cor. iv. 5.

i. The habit of judging others most injurious to the soul.
ii. S. Paul here bids us avoid it.
iii. Hence consider the question of rash judgment.
For, it may sometimes be even a mortal sin!

Rash Judgment:

i. Wilful suspicions without sufficient grounds.
ii. Opposed to
a. *Justice:* each has a right to his good name till really forfeited.
b. *Charity*, which
1. Thinketh no evil: 1 Cor. xiii. 5.
2. Teaches us to love others as ourselves.
iii. Committed by
a. Conceiving dislikes at first sight.
Totila and the Bishop.*
b. Attributing bad motives.
c. Assuming one addicted to sin, because once guilty.
d. Pronouncing guilty, without hearing the defence.
Eliphaz against Job iv. 7.
iv. Unfortunately, as common now as in the days of the Apostles.

Its Guilt seen thus:

i. God's word forbids it.

"Judge not, that you may not be judged." Mth. vii. 1.

ii. It shows corruption of heart, they judging most who are most guilty.

"The fool esteemeth all men fools." Eccles. x. 3.

iii. It usually arises from pride, usurping authority to judge.

"Who art thou that judgest thy neighbour?" Jas. iv. 13.

iv. Often also from jealousy and envy.
As in the Pharisees against Our Lord.

v. It is most injurious to our neighbour.
Unjustly depriving him of his reputation in our mind.

vi. It is so easy to be deceived, in passing judgment.
Benjamin's brothers and the cup: Gen. xliv.
The Pharisee, as to Mary Magdalen: Lke. vii. 39
The Pharisee, as to the Publican: Lke. xviii. 11.
Our own past experience.

Means to avoid it:

i. The practice of humility and charity.
ii. The consideration of one's own sins.
iii. Believe not every flying rumour you hear; but,
iv. Try to put kindly interpretations on the acts of others.

Resolution to avoid this sin, because

i. It is the parent of contempt and detraction.
ii. It robs God of His right to judge.
iii. It will end in our everlasting banishment from God.
iv. If we judge not, we shall not be judged severely. Mth. vii. 1.

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* Totila, King of the Goths, in the 6th. c. formed a bad opinion of a holy bishop, named Cassius, on account of his red and fiery complexion, saying he must be a drunkard. God however at once undertook the defence of His servant, for Totila's sword-bearer was suddenly tormented by the evil spirit. The by-standers in alarm carried the possessed man before the Bishop, who delivered him by simply making over him the sign of the Cross. Thereupon Totila retracted his rash judgment, and ever after revered Cassius as a saint.—*S. Gregory the Great.*

9. OUR LORD'S THREE-FOLD CHARACTER.

"God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness." Hebr. i. 9.

i. This text, from Ps. xliv. 8, suggests some of the features of the Messiah.
ii. He was called Christ, from a Greek word meaning anointed.

The Messiah anointed:

i. Not with material oil, like His prototypes:
ii. But with the fulness of the Divinity, for He was God: and
iii. With the "oil of gladness," *i.e.:*
  a. In the Incarnation, with *grace*, giving gladness to the heart.
  b. In the Resurrection, with the *glory* of triumph.
iv. Because He fulfils the three-fold office of King, Priest and Prophet: and,
v. Among the Hebrews, these were anointed with oil, to denote and support
  a. In *Kings:* authority to rule and legislate: 1 Kgs. xvi. 3: 3 Kgs. xix. 16.
  b. In *Priests:* power to offer sacrifice and prayer: Ex. xxix. 7: Numb. iii. 3.
  c. In *Prophets:* honour as ambassadors, of God: 3 Kgs. xix. 16.
vi. Adam's sin contained a three-fold guilt: viz. against God's
  a. *Authority*, refusing His command:
    Hence the weakness of our *Will.*
  b. *Love*, scorning His friendship:
    Hence the corruption of our *Heart.*
  c. *Wisdom*, believing rather the word of the tempter:
    Hence the ignorance in our *Intellect.*
vii. Now the Messiah came in a three-fold capacity, in order
  a. To atone for this three-fold offence against *God.*
  b. To repair this three-fold injury done to *Man.*

As King: Lke. i. 32.

"He shall reign . . . and of His Kingdom there shall be no end." Lke. i. 33.

i. Having all power in Heaven and on Earth. Mth. xxviii. 18.
ii. Destroying the empire of the devil, a rebel from the beginning.
iii. Making the conquest of men by His Precious Blood.
iv. Founding the Kingdom of His *Church*, on earth.
v. Establishing the Kingdom of His *Grace*, in souls.
vi. Regaining for us the Kingdom of *Glory*, in Heaven.

As Priest: Hebr. vi. 20.

i. According to the order of Melchisedech: Ps. cix. 4.
Offering a sacrifice, with which no other can compare.
ii. Immolating Himself on *Calvary*, for the atonement of sin.
iii. Offering Himself still in *Mass*, to apply His merits to souls.
Hence the dignity and value of Holy Mass!

As Prophet: Deut. xviii. 15.

i. Giving to man true knowledge of mysteries of Faith.
ii. Fulfilling in Himself the prophecies spoken of Him.
iii. Knowing all things, as being truly God: *e.g.*
Reading the secret thoughts of men: Mth. ix. 4: Jn. i. 47.
iv. Foretelling future events: *e.g.*
His Passion and Death: Mth. xx. 18, 19: Lke. xviii. 32.
The destruction of Jerusalem: Lke. xix. 44.

Lessons:

i. We are all anointed in Baptism, &c.: hence, each one is
a. King, to govern the kingdom of his heart.
b. Priest, to sacrifice his passions to the Law of God.
c. Prophet, to show by his life and example, his belief in the future.
ii. We must remember our three-fold dignity, and not degrade it by sin.
iii. Such a resolution, a worthy offering to our new-born Messiah.

10. OUR LORD'S FOUR-FOLD CHARACTER.

"Making purgation of sins." Hebr. i. 3.

The Text appropriate to Christmas Day: For,

i. The Nativity is the visible beginning of our Redeemer's career.

ii. To-day He announces the work of purgation of sins.

iii. The Prophet saw in vision four faces to the Cherubim. Ezech. i. 10.

Typifying the four-fold character of Christ, as oft represented in Art.

iv. To-day's Epistle recalls these emblems of the Messiah.

Hence consider the four-fold character of our new-born Saviour.

I. Face of a Man:

i. Denoting Our Lord's human nature, having

a. A *soul*, like ours, with all its faculties.

b. A *body*, like ours, with all its senses.

ii. Unless He were man, He could not suffer and atone. Human nature sinned: human nature must atone.

iii. As man, "appointed heir of all things."

As God, He was Creator and Lord of all.

a. Sharing the divine glory, (hypostatic union).

b. Through Him only, we become heirs of God.

c. Hence, the need of Baptism, Faith, &c.

iv. The hypostatic union will never be dissolved for all eternity.

II. Face of an Eagle:

i. Denoting Our Lord's divine nature, "by whom He made the world."

ii. Creation, being an act of wisdom, is attributed to the Son.

"All things were made by Him." Jn. i. 3.

iii. Giving to all His acts infinite merit and value.
Hence, equal to atone for the sins of a thousand worlds.
iv. "The brightness of His glory," *i.e.* same substance as the Father.
Comparison of the sun and its rays. *A Lap. in loc.*
v. "Upholding all things," *i.e.* omnipotent Providence.

III. **Face of an Ox:**

i. Denoting Our Lord's priesthood and sacrifice,
"Making purgation of sins."
Oxen, in the Old Law, the chief victims of sacrifice.
ii. Sin closed Heaven against the human race.
iii. All men and angels together unable to open it.
Finite creatures, hence finite efforts.
iv. Our Lord in mercy came to atone for sin.
Himself Priest and Victim of infinite value.

IV. **Face of a Lion:**

i. Denoting Our Lord's royalty and triumph; for,
"Sitteth on the right hand of the majesty on high."
The lion is king of animals, and fears none.
ii. Like other men, Our Lord died and was laid in the tomb.
His Body adorable there, as to-day in the Crib of Bethlehem.
iii. Unlike other men, He rose at once, a pledge of our resurrection.
iv. In His Resurrection, through His own will,
a. He showed His royalty and power.
b. He triumphed over death and all His enemies.

Resolution to honour Our Lord's four-fold character of
i. *God:* by adoration and sacrifice.
ii. *Man:* by gratitude and love.
iii. *Victim:* by reparation for sin.
iv. *King:* by confidence and service

11. THE FULNESS OF TIME.

"When the fulness of time was come, God sent His Son." Gal. iv. 4.

i. Words referring to the day fixed by God for the Incarnation.
ii. Perhaps about the year 4,000 of the world's creation.
iii. During these long centuries of time,

I. **God promised** a Redeemer, seven times over: viz. to
i. Adam and Eve: Gen. iii. 15.
ii. Abraham: Gen. xxii. 18.
iii. Isaac: Gen. xxvi. 24.
iv. Jacob: Gen. xxviii. 14.
v. Juda: Gen. xlix. 10.
vi. Moses: Deut. xviii. 15.
vii. David: 2 Kgs. vii. 12.

II. **God gave types** of the Redeemer: *e.g.*
i. Abel: as the man of suffering: Gen. iv.
ii. Noah: as the Saviour of men from the deluge of sin: Gen. vii.
iii. Isaias: as Victim for sin: Gen. xxii.
iv. Moses: as Deliverer of his people: Ex. xiv.
v. Manna: as Food of our souls: Ex. xvi.
vi. Brazen Serpent: as raised on the Cross, to heal us: Numb. xxi.

III. **God's Prophets foretold**: *e.g.*
i. His birth of a virgin: Is. vii. 14: Lke. ii.
ii. His birth in Bethlehem: Mich. v. 2: Mth. ii. 1.
iii. His flight into Egypt: Osee xi. 1: Mth. ii. 14.
iv. His resurrection: Ps. xv. 10: Mth. xxviii. 6.

IV. **God prepared the World** for Him:
i. From eternity, God decreed three great designs; and,
ii. To fulfil these, He raised four great empires: Dan. ii. 36.

FIRST DESIGN: The Jews were to be the depositaries of the true Religion.

First Empire: The Assyrians:

To punish the idolatry and infidelity of the Jews.

SECOND DESIGN: Birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem: Mich. v. 2.

Second Empire: The Persians.

i. To release the Jews from the captivity of Babylon.

ii. To enable them to settle again in Palestine.

THIRD DESIGN: The spread of the Gospel: Ezech. xviii. 23: Dan. ii. 44.

Third Empire: The Greeks: to prepare men's minds,

i. By spreading their language, in which the Gospel was to be written.

ii. By scattering the Jews, *e.g.* in the army, as missionaries of truth.

Fourth Empire: The Romans: to prepare the earth,

i. By bringing all nations under their rule: Gen. xlix. 10.

ii. By opening out roads, to facilitate communication.

Conclusion:

i. Then came the "fulness of time," and God sent His Son into the world.

ii. The long delay of thousands of years

a. Taught man his helplessness and misery.

b. Showed him the need and cost of a remedy.

c. Implies an eternal design in the mind of God.

d. Shows how Religion goes back to the very beginning of time.

iii. Recognize how God holds in His hands the reins of empires, and makes all things serve the accomplishment of His designs.

iv. Confide therefore in God; know you are in His keeping, and under His watchful care.

21. HERESIES ON THE INCARNATION.

"God sent His Son, made of a woman." Gal. iv. 4.

i. Almost every doctrine of the Church has been attacked.
ii. The mystery of the Incarnation no exception: *e.g.* by
  a. The Arians, on the *Divinity* of our Lord.
  b. The Monothelites, on His *Humanity*.
  c. The Nestorians, on the *Union* of the two natures.
iii. To study these errors helps to elucidate the dogma of the Incarnation.

I. Arians:

i. Named from Arius, priest of Alexandria, 4th c. who
ii. Held Our Lord to be a creature only, with divine power.
iii. Denied thus His divine nature, and His equality with the Father.
iv. Were condemned in the Council of Nicæa, A.D. 325.
  a. The Nicene Creed: *Consubstantialem*.
  b. All turning on one letter in a Greek word. (ὁμοούσιος, not ὁμοιούσιος.)
v. Denial of the Divinity is also denial of the Redemption.
vi. Hence the need of exactness in matters of dogma. The death of Arius.*

II. Monothelites:

i. From Greek words meaning 'one will.'
ii. Held Our Lord had but one will—the divine.
  a. Hence, that He was not truly man.
  b. Yet, He was "made of a woman," *i.e.* human, with a human will.
iii. Condemned in the Council of Constantinople, A.D. 680.

iv. In Christ there are two wills, viz.

a. Human:

"Remove this Chalice from Me."

b. Divine:

"Not My will, but Thine be done." Lke. xxii. 42.

v. The two always in perfect union, though truly distinct. The Human ever subject to the Divine, as in the Agony.

III. Nestorians:

i. Named from Nestorius, Bp. of Constantinople, 5th c.

ii. Held there are two persons in Christ.

iii. Denied thus the hypostatic union.

iv. Taught therefore that Mary is not "Mother of God," But of Christ, as man only.

v. Condemned in the Council of Ephesus, A.D. 431.

a. Solemn definition of the title "Mother of God."

b. Rejoicings thereat throughout the city.

Lessons:

i. The Church has had heresy to oppose all through her history.

ii. This warfare such that she could not survive, except under the protection of the Holy Ghost.

iii. Confidence therefore in the Church, as the work of God.

iv. Importance of knowing well the true teachings of the Church.

This, only through instruction and good books.

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* Arius had many followers and was with them preparing one day to be forcibly received back into the Church. With much parade, they formed a joyful procession, when suddenly their leader was seized with frightful spasms which compelled him to retire. After some delay, he was found on the floor, his blood and intestines strewn around him: his body had burst asunder, like that of Judas. —*Theodoret.*

13. A GOOD LIFE.

"We should live soberly and justly and godly." Tit. ii. 12.

i. Text most suitable to the beginning of a new year.
ii. Suggests how we must live henceforth; viz. in
  a. *Sobriety*, as to ourselves:
  b. *Justice*, as to our neighbour, and
  c. *Religion*, as to God.

I. Soberly:

i. Duty regarding our own lives.
ii. Avoid excess in food, and especially in drink.
  What sins of drunkenness during the year past!
iii. But sobriety here implies the cardinal virtue of Temperance, *i.e.*
  a. Moderation in all things, even lawful.
  b. Restraint of the senses.
  c. The spirit of self-denial.
iv. Effects on ourselves:
  a. Brightness and cheerfulness.
  b. Evenness of disposition.
  c. Health and strength of body.
  d. Perseverance in the practice of virtue.
v. A first maxim with all holy persons: *e.g.*
  Judith viii. 6.
  Daniel x. 3.
  S. John the Baptist: Mth. iii. 4: Lke. i. 15.
  S. Peter of Alcantara: Oct. 19.

II. Justly:

i. Essential duty we owe to our neighbour.
ii. How great the sins of injustice in the world! *e.g.*
  a. Theft and robbery.
  b. Fraud and deceit in every form.
  c. Injury to name and character in any way.

iii. How irreparable often the evils that follow! *e.g.*
  a. Hatred and dislikes.
  b. Lawsuits and quarrels.
  c. Hardness of heart.
  d. Even bloodshed and murder.
iv. How binding, yet how difficult, the duty of restitution!

III. Godly:

i. Words embracing all our duties to God.
ii. How great, how widespread the neglect of them!
iii. Yet the first and foremost duty of each one.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God." Mth. vi. 33.

iv. Observance of God's commandments.
v. Obedience to His Church.
vi. Resignation to the Divine Will.
vii. The Sacrifice of the Mass, on Sundays and Holydays.
viii. The Sacraments, channels of Grace to souls.

Lessons:

i. To-day we begin a new year of life.
  a. Shall we see the end of it?
  b. Thousands certainly will not!
ii. Need therefore of good resolutions on these three points.
iii. "A good beginning is half the work."
  Hence start well, with God's grace.
iv. Then look with hope for the "coming of the glory of God."

14. CHRIST, OUR REDEEMER.

"Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us." Tit. ii. 14.

i. We not only believe that Christ became man for us,
ii. But we also know the object of His birth—our redemption.

Redemption:

i. Idea of a Redeemer seen in one who ransoms a slave.*
ii. Need of a Redeemer.
  a. Adam's sin closed Heaven to man.
  b. Malice of this sin against God infinite.
  c. Thus man, a finite being, could not repair it.
  d. Hence the need of a God-man to do so.
iii. Effected by Our Lord's shedding His Blood for us.
  a. He offered Himself to God, as Priest and Victim.
  b. Sacrifice of infinite value, because of the dignity of His person.
iv. Universal, *i.e.* for all men:

"Propitiation for the sins of the whole world." 1 Jn. ii. 2.
"Christ died for all." 2 Cor. v. 15.
"Who gave Himself a redemption for all." 1 Tim. ii. 6.

  a. For those living before the Incarnation, through faith in the future Redeemer.
  b. For those coming afterwards, by living up to His teachings.

Benefits of the Redemption:

i. Delivery from sin.

"Redemption through His Blood, the remission of sins." Eph. i. 7.
"Who washed us from our sins." Apoc. i. 5.

ii. Hence, delivery from Hell, the punishment of sin.

"Who hath delivered us from the wrath to come." 1 Thess. i. 10.

iii. The grace of election:

"The Father chose us in Him" (Christ). Eph. i. 4.

iv. The grace of justification, *i.e.* sanctifying grace.

"The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." 1 Jn. i. 7.

a. "By which we remain in Christ, and He in us." Jn. xv. 4.

b. Which makes our works pleasing to God.

c. By which they become the works of Christ Himself.

As branches receive nourishment from the trunk.

d. Which makes them meritorious of

v. Eternal glory:

"Whom He justified, them He also glorified." Rom. viii. 30.
"The grace of God, life everlasting." Rom. vi. 23.
"He became the cause of eternal salvation." Hebr. v. 9.

Lessons:

i. Deep love of gratitude to our most holy Redeemer.

ii. Observance of His Law, as proof of our love.

"If you love Me, keep My commandments." Jn. xvi. 15.

iii. Charity to all men, redeemed like ourselves.

Otherwise our love of God is not genuine: 1 Jn. iv. 20.

iv. To effect our salvation, we must *believe* and *love*.

"Faith that worketh by charity." Gal. v. 6.

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* To free their brethren from slavery and to buy them their liberty has ever been looked upon by Christians as one of the greatest of good works. S. Paulinus, of Nola, even himself became a slave to redeem another, and S. Exuperius sold the sacred vessels, in order to have means to fulfil this merciful duty.

15. HOLY INNOCENTS.

History;

i. Our Lord was persecuted, as soon as He came among men.
Hence we may not expect better treatment: Mth. x. 24.

ii. Herod, King of Judæa, was a monster of iniquity and cruelty.
Having put to death his mother, mother-in-law, two sons and many friends.

iii. Hearing the Magi's enquiry about Christ, he was troubled: Mth. ii. 3.
a. Hence he resolved on the death of the Child of Bethlehem.
b. He feigned a wish to go and adore the new born King: *Ibid.* 8.
With dagger in hand, to slay Him! But,
c. God admonished the Magi not to return to Herod to report.
d. He also ordered S. Joseph to carry the Child into Egypt.
1. A journey of some 200 miles.
2. Tradition as to the idols falling. Is. xix. 1.
3. Fulfilment of the prophecy of Osee xi. 1.

iv. Obedience of S. Joseph: prompt, blind, courageous.
a. He was not told how long to remain there.
A constant anxiety: yet was he ever resigned.
b. The gold of the Magi was a help during the exile.

v. Thus frustrated in his design, Herod was exceeding angry: Mth. ii. 16.
a. He therefore resolved to slay all male children under 2 years in and around Bethlehem.
b. Soldiers sent to massacre all, perhaps over 100.
1. Obedience and harshness of the military.
2. Sufferings and shrieks of the children and their mothers.
c. Yet happy was the death of these children!
1. Just receiving life, and already losing it for Christ.

2. Their special glory: to die *instead* of Him.
3. How few might otherwise have escaped the evils of life!

d. Their mothers thought not of this, hence their lamentations.

As we oft regret accidents, though blessings in disguise.

vi. How blind and furious a passion is ambition: see Herod!

vii. Misery and misfortunes of his last end:

a. He survives the massacre by only a short time.

He would have committed suicide, had he been allowed.

b. Sickness and sufferings intense, in the body.

1. Worms were breeding in his very wounds.
2. The stench thereof drove away even his best friends.

c. Torture of mind, through remorse and despair.

1. Yet amid all, he had a son executed in prison; and,
2. Ordered some Jews to be executed after his own decease!

d. At length, he died miserably, cursed by all the people.

See the angered Justice of God in these punishments.

Reflections:

i. Parents are bound to see their children devoted to God.

a. Imprinting the best sentiments on their young minds.

b. Instructing them thoroughly in their religion; for,

c. Without knowing God, we cannot love or serve Him.

ii. Great too should be the zeal of children and others to hear of God.

The eternal truths; and our various duties.

iii. Do not unduly lament the death of innocent children: for,

a. If baptized, they are at once united to God for eternity.

b. Could a greater blessing ever be given them?

16. LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

"If God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another." 1 Jn. iv. 11.

i. The epistles of Christmastide full of the subject of charity; for,
ii. The Love of God appeared to us in the Incarnation. Hence,
iii. S. John argues we must love one another.

We must love our neighbour:

i. All persons, even our enemies:
ii. In God and for God, as a motive.
iii. Because:
  a. God so commands:
    "Thou shalt love thy neighbour." Mth. xxii. 39.
    "A new commandment: that you love one another." Jn. xiii. 34.
  b. We are all children of God, and brothers of Christ." Mth. xxiii. 9.
  c. In loving them, we love God: Prov. xix. 17.
  d. It is a powerful means to obtain mercy: 1 Pet. iv. 8.
  e. Without this, we cannot truly love God: 1 Jn. iv. 20.
iv. This love of others makes earth a foretaste of Heaven.
v. This one law, if observed, would dispense with all human law.

This brotherly love:

i. Makes us regard our neighbours' interests as our own.
  a. The very spirit of Christianity.
  b. Opposed to the spirit of envy.

ii. Produces:
  a. Peace and concord.
  b. Willingness to act and suffer for others.
  c. Readiness on their part to do likewise.
iii. Shown by:
  a. Sincere congratulations on success.
  b. Sympathy in trial and sorrow.
  c. Repression of rancour and ill-feeling.
  d. Not giving offence.
  e. Not taking offence.
  f. The Works of Mercy, corporal and spiritual.
iv. Exemplified in:
  Abraham towards Lot: Gen. xiii. 8.
  David and Jonathan: 1 Kgs. xviii.
  Our Lady towards her cousin: Lke. i. 39.
  S. John, throughout his Epistles.
  Founders of Orders, making it an essential point of their rule.
v. Attained by:
  a. Love of God first, of which it is a part.
  b. Considering that
    1. Envy makes us resemble the devil.
    2. We are all brothers in God.
  c. Speaking well of others and defending them.
  d. Helping a neighbour.
  e. Seeing Christ in all men.

Lessons:

i. Appreciate the spirit of the Church at this season of love.
ii. In imitation of the love of Bethlehem, show love to others.
iii. Mere philanthropy is not the Christian love of our neighbour.
  For it has no motives higher than this earth.
iv. Practical and detailed resolutions for the year just begun.

17. THE FEAST OF CONVERTS.

"The Gentiles shall walk in Thy light." Is. lx. 3.

i. The three Kings were the first Gentiles to visit Bethlehem.

ii. They were the first converts to walk in the light of faith.

iii. To-day thus becomes the Feast of Converts.

iv. Consider some points of resemblance between the Kings and Converts.

The Kings:

i. Their life before they saw the Star:
   - *a.* Seeking the true God, yet with uncertainty.
   - *b.* Anxious to remain at home, God now calling elsewhere.

ii. The Star arises: Mth. ii. 2.
   - *a.* Their heart tells them to follow it.
   - *b.* Friends blame and expostulate; but,
   - *c.* They are faithful to the call, and set out.

iii. The Star at one time disappears,
   - *a.* As they near Jerusalem and its crowds.
   - *b.* But this only quickens enquiry: Mth. ii. 2.
   - *c.* False counsels given, which they do not follow: Mth. ii. 8.

iv. The Star reappears:
   - *a.* To their intense joy.
   - *b.* They persevere on their way.
   - *c.* And reach Bethlehem in safety.

v. They find the new-born Saviour: Mth. ii. 11.
   - *a.* Their adoration and three-fold offering.
   - *b.* Perhaps they embrace the Divine Child; and,
   - *c.* Enjoy sensible sweetness, a strength to the faith.

vi. They return home by another road: Mth. ii. 12.
   - *a.* To escape the treachery of Herod.
   - *b.* Living now by the light they have received.
   - *c.* Becoming missionaries among their countrymen.
   - *d.* Their peaceful and happy death.

II. **Converts:**

i. Life before conversion:
   a. Often truly conscientious, according to their lights.
   b. Content with their state, though doubts sometimes arise.
ii. Some circumstance in life arrests their serious attention. *e.g.*
   A reverse of fortune, a sermon, an accident, etc.
   a. They feel drawn to examine their position.
   b. Friends hearing this, treat it as folly.
   c. But they are determined, and seek advice.
iii. The voice of conscience sometimes dies down:
   a. Perhaps through worldly cares and preoccupation.
   b. Anxious friends encourage the indifference.
   c. Yet faithful to God, they correspond to their grace.
iv. Then the true path seems more clear than ever.
   a. Their conscience once more at ease.
   b. They continue instructions, reading, etc.
   c. Final resolve to embrace the Catholic Faith.
v. Baptism and other Sacraments:
   a. Fervour and devotion.
   b. Often spiritual sweetness as encouragement.
vi. They continue their routine of life.
   a. Avoiding however discussions on Religion.
   b. Rejoicing in true peace of mind.
   c. Influencing others by their example
   d. Good life and holy death.

Lessons:

i. Gratitude for the gift of Faith.
ii. Fidelity to grace.
iii. Zeal to obtain the same for others.

18. CONVERSION OF THE GENTILES.

"The strength of the Gentiles shall come to thee." Is. lx. 5.

i. To-day's lesson prophetical of the world's conversion.
Isaias lived some 700 years B.C.
ii. Read to-day, the Christmas Day of the Gentiles.
a. The three Kings, the first called among them.
b. As the Shepherds were among the Jews.
iii. "The strength of the Gentiles," *i.e.* great and powerful nations.
iv. "Shall come to thee," *i.e.* to the Church, here called Jerusalem.
v. Consider some examples:

I. Early Conversions:

i. Rome alone in the 4th c. had already 40 Churches.
ii. Most of Italy converted by the disciples of S. Peter.
iii. Gaul, in the 1st c. by disciples of other Apostles.
In the 3rd c. it had as many bishoprics as large cities.
iv. The north of Africa, in the 2nd c.
70 Bishops at the Council of Carthage, end of 2nd c.
v. Conversion of Spain, A.D. 250.

II. Ireland: 5th c.

i. S. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland.
a. Early carried into slavery.
b. On his release, his studies in Rome.
c. Sent as missionary by Pope Celestine.
ii. Eagerness with which he was listened to.
Source of the veneration still shown to him.
Tradition of the shamrock-leaf.
iii. Success of his apostolic labours.
a. Foundation of monasteries innumerable.
b. Conversion of the island.
c. Its fidelity to the Faith.

III. **England**: 6th c.

i. Christianity from the time of the Apostles, even.
ii. Increased by the conversion of King Lucius, A.D. 180.
S. Alban, our proto-martyr, A.D. 303—June 22.
iii. Permanently established through monks sent from Rome, viz.
iv. S. Augustine and 40 companions, A.D. 597.
a. The landing in Kent.
b. Interview with Ethelbert under the oak.*
c. Conversion of the King and of many of his people.
d. See of Canterbury established, with the primacy.
v. Flourishing state of Religion till the 16th c.
vi. Catholic revival of the present time.

IV. **Missionary enterprise** nowadays: *e.g.*

i. In China, by the Jesuits.
ii. In India, by the Jesuits and Dominicans.
iii. In Africa, by the Oblates of M.I. and the White Fathers.

Lessons:

i. The Epiphany is *our* Christmas Day, we being Gentiles.
ii. Gratitude for the call to the true Faith.
iii. Zeal to extend this grace to others:
a. By prayer, that the prophet's words may be fully realized.
b. By contributions to missionary societies.

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* The Saxon prince, Ethelbert, received the missionaries under an oak, in an open field, at the suggestion of his priests, who had told him that in such a situation the spells of the foreign magicians would lose their influence. Ethelbert at first refused to abandon the gods of his fathers, but the missionaries were allowed to preach without molestation, and were supported at his expense. On the feast of Pentecost in the following year, he himself received Baptism. —*Lingard.*

19. "REASONABLE SERVICE."

"A living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God." Rom. xii. 1.

i. Sacrifice ever an essential to *public* worship.
   a. In the Old Law, sacrifices of animals.
   b. In the New Law, the sacrifice of the Mass.
ii. In *private* devotion also, sacrifice is necessary.
   The Apostle asks the sacrifice of our bodies.

I. Living Sacrifice:

i. S. Paul alludes to the olden sacrifices, animals *slain.*
ii. With these he contrasts *living* victims, our bodies, as they are:
ii Living, because
   a. Still inhabited by the soul, not slain and dead.
   b. Animated by vivifying works of the spiritual life: *e.g.*
      Christian virtues, almsdeeds, prayer.
   c. Especially, mortification makes it a living victim; and is
      1. A sort of death, the death of concupiscence.
      2. In some degree, necessary to all men.
         Though in its perfection, only of counsel.
      3. The way to sanctity; it may even fit for martyrdom.
iv. Three kinds of sacrifice of ourselves to God: viz.
   a. Of the *mind*, by prayer.
   b. Of the *body*, by mortification, etc.
   c. Of our *works*, by almsdeeds.
      S. Cyprian to the convicts.*

II. Holy Sacrifice:

The Jewish victims sacred, and not to be touched by the unclean: Lev. i. 3.
i. Holy, because
   a. Dedicated to God in Baptism.
   b. Thus separated from things profane: *e.g.* pride, ambition.

c. Especially, it must be kept free from impure sin.
1. So directly opposed to the holiness of God.
2. Chastity according to one's state essential to holiness.

ii. Keep thus holy the body that is to be offered to God.

III. Pleasing Sacrifice:

The Jewish victims were as an odour of sweetness to God: Lev. i. 17.

i. Pleasing, when truly a holy and living sacrifice, (as above) if, *e.g.:*
a. The eyes refrain from sinful looks.
b. The tongue, from uncharitable language.
c. The hands, from unlawful gains.
d. The feet, from leading us to sin: *S. Chrysostom.*

ii. On the contrary, our sacrifice is not pleasing, if we are
a. Proud and rebellious against God.
b. Jealous and envious of others.
c. Given to unlawful pleasure.
d. Guilty of injustice in any form.
If such be our state, no sacrifice of ours can please God.

Lessons:

i. Ever then present your bodies to God, a sacrifice worthy of Him.

ii. Thus will you give Him your "reasonable service," *i.e.*
a. Service dictated by reason and discretion.
b. Not mere outward service, like that of the Jews.
c. But a spiritual worship of the soul guiding the body.

iii. Such service will assuredly bring you a blessing, here and hereafter.

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* S. Cyprian consoled those who, for their Faith, were condemned to work in the mines, by telling them that, though deprived of the Holy Sacrifice of the Eucharist, they could offer to God a victim, pleasing to Him and meritorious for themselves, by bearing their painful trials in patience, a sacrifice of their bodies offered night and day unceasingly, holy, living and pleasing, according to the words of the text.

20. CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH.

"We being many are one body in Christ." Rom. xii. 5.

i. The Apostle compares the Church to the human frame.
ii. As the body has a complex formation, so too the Church.
iii. Consider then its Constitution.

I. The Head:

i. The human body has a head.
Body without head is a contradiction.
a. Seat of the directing power—the Intellect.
b. United with the various members of the body.
ii. The Church also has a head.
a. Jesus Christ, its Founder, the invisible Head, in Heaven.
b. The Pope, His Vicar, its visible Head, on earth.
The Church, a visible society, needs a visible head.
c. This two-fold headship not a contradiction.
King and Viceroy exist for the same dependency of India.
d. No society can exist without a head.
e. From this Head flows all power and authority;
f. To it all final appeals are made.

II. The Members:

i. The body has various members; (hands, feet, etc.)
a. Each has its own work and function:
Eyes, to see; feet, to walk.
b. Yet in union and sympathy with each other.
c. All subject to the head and its commands.
ii. The Church too has various members and grades.
a. Each its own duty to fulful: *e.g.*
Bishops . . Priests . . Faithful: 1 Cor. xii. 29.

b. All in union with each other, by
1. The *interior* link of Faith and Grace.
2. The *exterior* link of Sacraments and Worship.
c. All united to the Head, by
Love, reverence and obedience.

III. The Soul:

i. The body has a soul to animate it.
a. Without it, the body is a corpse, helpless, etc.
b. This soul gives life and energy to its every part.
ii. The Church also has a soul—the Holy Ghost.

"In one Spirit we were all baptized into one body." 1 Cor. xii. 13.

a. Our Lord's work incomplete, till the Spirit descended on it.
b. Powers of the Apostles in abeyance, till He came upon them.
c. His love and grace unite the members together, and give them spiritual increase and sanctification.
d. He thus animates with divine life the mystical body of Christ.

Conclusion:

i. Thus does the human body truly typify the Church.
ii. This briefly the Constitution of the Church, of which
a. The invisible Head and Soul are divine.
b. The visible Members, human.
iii. *We* are members of this mystical body; hence,
a. Be grateful for so signal a grace.
b. Live lives worthy of such a vocation. Eph. iv. 1.
c. Pray that others also may share it.*

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* The Holy Ghost declares the absolute necessity for all men to be, as members of a body, in perfect union with the Church, in order to be in union with Christ. Separation from her, if culpable, is irreparable folly, for separation from her, the Body, means separation from Christ, the Head, and the Holy Ghost, the Soul. The result of such separation is, that spiritual life is impossible for one in such a state—as impossible as is natural life for a limb dissevered from the body.—*Duke.*

21. FERVOUR AND TEPIDITY.

"In spirit fervent." Rom. xii. 11.

i. S. Paul bids us be fervent in the service of the Lord of Lords:

Whose eyes are ever upon us in the homage we do Him.

ii. Consider then the subject of Fervour, and of its opposite, Tepidity.

Fervour:

i. An ardent and efficacious desire of living up to our vocation.

a. The state of the Saints upon earth.

b. Should be the state of all who aim at perfection.

ii. Motives:

a. The greatness of God's goodness to us.

b. His liberality to His faithful servants.

c. The shortness of time allotted to us for work.

d. The joy of heart which Fervour brings.

iii. Means:

a. Meditation on such motives.

b. The thought of the uncertainty of life.*

c. See the zeal of worldlings in their pursuits.

d. Remember the greatness of future rewards.

iv. Fruits:

a. Great courage for good.

b. Self-distrust.

c. Love of mortification.

d. Holy indifference.

e. Peace of heart.

v. Examples:

King David, in the service of God: 1 Par. xxix. 2.

S. Ignatius, whose face seemed inflamed in prayer: Jly. 31.

S. Stanislaus Kostka, who died of fulness of divine love: Nov. 13.

Tepidity:

i. The very opposite of Fervour, a canker in the soul.
ii. Recognized by such symptoms as:
  a. Facility in omitting exercises of religion.
  b. Negligence in those we do perform.
  c. Acting without any kind of intention.
  d. Seeking comfort and distraction in earthly things.
  e. Contempt of small things, and opportunities for good.
  f. Thinking rather of the good we have done, than of the good left undone.
iii. Most hateful to God, who condemns it so forcibly, in a passage without any parallel in Scripture: Apoc. iii. 16.
iv. Effects:
  a. The forming of a false conscience.
  b. Fear to undertake too much for God.
  c. Irreverent use of the Sacraments.
v. Examples: They are tepid and lukewarm, who, *e.g.*:
  a. Are patient, when they have nothing to suffer.
  b. Are gentle, when uncontradicted.
  c. Are humble, when honour is untouched.
  d. Wish to be saints, without trouble or struggle.
  e. Are willing to do many things, but not to take Heaven by violence.
vi. Remedies:
  a. Quicken your Faith, by meditation on the eternal Truths.
  b. Don't have too many things to do.
  c. Preserve silence, without singularity.
  d. Persevere in spiritual exercises.
  e. Practise bodily penance and self-denial.

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* If thou wouldst oftener think of thy death than of the length of thy life, no doubt thou wouldst more fervently amend thyself.—*Imit.* I. xxi.

22. CURSING.

"Curse not." Rom. xii. 14.

i. The Epistle to-day a continuation of last Sunday's.
ii. S. Paul continues his instructions to his Roman converts.
iii. In them, much for us also to learn: to-day on cursing. Sin very common nowadays: hence, worthy of consideration.

Cursing:

i. Praying evil on ourselves, or any of God's creatures.
ii. Sin of diabolical malice, because
  a. Directly opposed to the Law of God,
    1. Who tells us to *love* one another.
    2. While the curser *hates* his neighbour.
  b. Opposed to the very object of the Incarnation.
    1. Which is the *salvation* of men.
    2. The curser prays for their *damnation.*
  c. It usually gives bad example. Mth. xviii. 6. Especially in parents, masters, etc.
  d. He shows ingratitude, who curses his tools, cattle, etc.
    1. All these are God's gifts, deserving of thanks.
    2. No wonder if such a one does not prosper!
  e. Cursing is the language of Hell!
iii. Scripture gives four cases where cursing is answered:
  a. The poor cursing the rich who oppress them.
    "The prayer of him (the poor) that curseth thee shall be heard." Ecclus. iv. 6.
  b. Widows and orphans cursing their oppressors.
    "The widow's tears . . . the Lord will not be delighted with them." Ecclus. xxxv. 19.

c. Parents cursing their children—How common a sin!

"The mother's curse rooteth up the foundation." Ecclus. iii. 11.

A mother's curse.*

d. People cursing themselves.

"He loved cursing, and it shall come unto him." Ps. cviii. 18.

The Jews in the wilderness: Numb. xiv. 3, 29.
The Jews on Calvary: Mth. xxvii. 25.

Guilt of cursing:

i. Mortal sin, when
   a. The evil is great and adverted to; or,
   b. The habit is continued.
ii. Venial sin, where
   a. The evil is not great, or deliberate; or,
   b. The habit is being corrected.

Lessons:

i. Realize the evil of this sin:
   a. So hateful to God.
   b. So injurious to His creatures.
   c. Yet so common in the world!
ii. Renounce this shocking and anti-Christian practice.
iii. Avoid coarse and profane language of any kind.
iv. Make reparation to the Holy Name of God herein abused: *e.g.*
   a. To say the Litany of the Holy Name; (to-day.)
   b. To say the Divine Praises.

* A rich widow, in Florence, had two children, whom she loved even to weakness, never refusing them anything. One day however she was constrained to refuse some unreasonable request; but this so irritated them that they raised their hand and struck her. In her anger, the poor mother cursed her children, praying the devil to seize them. At that very moment, he did so, and they began to fight like wild beasts, ready to tear each other to pieces. It was only on the prayer of S. Zenobius, Bishop of Florence, that they were healed, and their conversion effected.—*Delmas.*

23. REVENGE.

"Not revenging yourselves, my dearly beloved." Rom. xii. 19.

i. S. Paul warns his Roman converts against revenge.
ii. A sin common in the world, to be now considered.

Revenge; and spite.

i. Returning evil for evil.
ii. Most sinful, as directly opposed to the Law of God.

"If one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other." Mth. v. 39.
"Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.' Mth. v. 44.
"Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.' Rom. xii. 21.

S. John Gualbert observed these commands: Jly. 12

iii. Arrogates God's attribute to itself.

"Revenge is mine, and I will repay." Deut. xxxii. 35.
"He that seeketh to revenge himself shall find vengeance from the Lord." Ecclus. xxviii. 1.

a. A great evil to be the object of God's anger.

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Hebr. x. 31.

b. For God's anger is terrible in its effects: *e.g.*
The Deluge: Gen. vii.
The destruction of Sodom: Gen. xix. 24.

c. Therefore, instead of revenge, show pity to a victim of God's displeasure.

Effects of taking revenge:

i. It bars the way to God's forgiveness.

"If you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you." Mth. vi. 15.

ii. It makes the *Our Father* a mockery on our lips.

"Forgive us our trespasses *as we* forgive."

A nun's revenge.*

iii. It unfits us for the Sacraments.

"Go first to be reconciled to thy brother." Mth. v. 24.

iv. It leads to injustice, calumny, even murder.

v. It destroys peace of mind.

Like a splinter left in a wound.

Remedies against revenge:

i. Meditation on the injury sin does to God, who so punishes it.

ii. Thought of *His* readiness to pardon and forgive.

"I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezech. xxxiii. 11.

"Who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad." Mth. v. 45.

iii. Prayer for those for whom we feel ill-will—most efficacious.

"Pray for them that persecute you." Mth. v. 44.

iv. The sight of Our Lord on the Cross.

"Father, forgive them." Lke. xxiii. 34.

v. Thus will you avoid a sin—so hateful to God, so injurious to others, and so ruinous to your own soul.

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* During the cholera epidemic in Paris, in 1832, a Sister of Charity, going into the hospital, was rudely insulted by a passing workman. One morning a new patient was brought in whose condition seemed desperate. "No more room," was the answer of the person in charge: but the Sister was there, recognized the patient and exclaimed: "Do not refuse him: I'll find him a corner somewhere, and will tend him myself." And without neglecting her other patients, she cared for this one so well that in eight or ten days he was convalescent: but one morning she was missed from his side: she died of the cholera taken in attending the one who had insulted her: she revenged herself on him after the manner of the Saints.—*Guillois.*

24. APOSTOLIC COUNSELS.

i. How strange we are no better than we are!
ii. It is not through lack of instruction, for we have
  a. Moses and the Prophets.
  b. Our Lord's divine teaching.
  c. The example of Our Lord and the Saints.
  d. S. Paul's epistles these weeks past.
    Let us try to profit by all these.
iii. To-day again three plain lessons are inculcated, viz:

I. True self-knowledge:

"Be not wise in your own conceits." Rom. xii. 16.

i. Perfect self-knowledge lies in true humility.
ii. Humility is a true estimate of ourselves.
  a. It does not imply falsehood: *e.g.*
    Saying we have no talent, if we really have.
  b. But refers all merit to God alone.
  c. It acknowledges its own weakness and is not puffed up.
iii. Sometimes men have overweening ideas as to their own judgment.
  a. Foolishness of this: for,
  b. Their past mistakes and the experience of the world should make them diffident.
iv. Fear not to seek counsel and advice from others.
v. What it takes years of experience to learn, grace can teach quickly, if we follow the Apostle's advice: Rom. xii. 16.

II. Forgiveness of Injuries:

"To no man rendering evil for evil." Rom. xii. 17.

i. You may expect injury at the hands of others: for, In this world good and evil are mixed.

ii. If you expect it, be not troubled when it comes.
  a. "Forewarned is forearmed;" thus,
  b. You are better fitted to meet it.
iii. Evil tends to beget evil.
  a. To return it is folly and sin.
  b. It multiplies the miseries of life.
  c. It recoils on ourselves.
iv. Therefore overcome evil by doing good: Rom. xii. 21.
  a. Forgiving injuries.
  b. Praying for them that persecute you: Mth. v. 44.

III. Good Example:

"Providing good things . . . in the sight of all men." Rom. xii. 17.

i. Further means of fighting against evil.
ii. Not to be done for vanity or applause; but,
iii. As Christians, men are entitled to expect good from us: Mth. v. 16.
iv. Hence fear not to do good before others: *e.g.*
  a. To lead a practical Catholic life.
  b. To do works of mercy, etc.
v. Good example tends to right the balance of good, as against evil in the world.

Conclusion:

i. What a blessing to learn but one lesson every Sunday!
ii. During Mass, ask, through S. Paul, the grace to profit by his teachings to-day.
iii. Then we *shall* improve and make some progress.

25. PAYMENT OF DEBTS.

"Owe no man anything." Rom. xiii. 8.

i. There is one debt we can never fully pay—the debt of charity.*

ii. All other debts we must try to discharge.
"Owe no man anything."

iii. Too often neglected is this precept of the Apostle.

We must pay our debts:

i. When goods are bought, the price of them belongs to the seller.
He parts with them, on the understanding we pay him their value.

ii. To refuse payment is an unjust keeping of what belongs to another.
a. Now, all unjust keeping is forbidden by the 7th Commandment.
b. It is always sinful, therefore, to some degree.
c. Hence, we must pay our debts.

iii. Under this heading come wages, loans, interest, rent, etc.
a. They are all real debts of justice.
b. But how often is there unnecessary delay in paying them.

iv. We must economize, so as to be able to meet our liabilities.†

Evils of delay:

i. Inconvenience and loss to creditors.
a. Tradesmen have goods to buy, for resale.
b. These *they* must pay for.
c. But how do it, if their own dues be withheld?
d. All know the inconvenience of want of money.

ii. Sometimes such delay may spell ruin.
a. Tradespeople being thus unable to pay their way, further goods are refused them.
b. What responsibility in us, to place them in such a position!

iii. Necessity of having to make restitution, founded on
a. The *Natural* Law, implanted in the heart.
b. The *Divine* Law of God: Ex. xxii. 5: Mth. xxii. 21.

c. The *Civil* Law of nations.
d. Duty most strictly binding, where possible.
e. Duty oftentimes as difficult as it is essential, *e.g.*
Through human respect, fear of detection, etc.

iv. Ill-feeling between neighbours:
a. Men thus defrauded naturally resent the evil.
b. Ill-feeling may then spring up, which
1. May deepen into hatred, and
2. Lead to detraction, calumny, etc.
c. Thus is scandal produced.

v. Scorn and ridicule brought on Religion: for,
a. Too often "Good church-goers are bad debt-payers."
b. Too often they run into debt for mere luxuries.
c. Too often they borrow, without prospect of being able to repay;
d. Too often they take offence, when asked to settle accounts!
e. All this is opposed to simple honesty and true Religion.
Hence the contempt into which Religion is brought.

Lessons:

i. Ever show real honesty in all your dealings with others.
ii. Be thoughtful to pay your just debts within reasonable time.
iii. If bound to restitution, make it at once.
Conscience cannot rest till this be done. Better still—
iv. Avoid the difficulty of restitution, by avoiding the cause of it.
v. All this will be easy, if we make Christian charity our guide.

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* I always owe charity to others, which alone when paid leaves me still their debtor. Mutual love I willingly give, and gladly receive. When I receive it, I still demand it, and when I pay it, I still owe it.—*S. Augustine.*

† Let no man ever think that economy is meanness, or that it is to be despised. It is he who saves that can afford to give; and nothing is mean which is honest, and which enables us to do justice to others.

26. THE DECALOGUE.

i. S. Paul tells us charity is the fulfilment of the Law: Rom. xiii. 10.
ii. He then goes on to recall a good part of this Law.
iii. Take this occasion to speak on the Decalogue.

The Decalogue:

i. So called from the Greek, meaning "ten words."
ii. Comprises the ten Commandments, given on Sina: Ex. xx.
  a. A compendium of Morals, as the Creed is of Faith.
  b. Explicit statement of the laws of truth, order, and justice.
iii. Like God Himself, they are
  Holy . . . True . . . Just . . . Unchangeable.
iv. Necessary for salvation.
  a. Our first duty to God is belief in His Revelation.
    Delivering the *Mind* from ignorance.
  b. Our second duty is observance of His Laws.
    Delivering the *Heart* from concupiscence.
  c. Need of knowing these laws, through instruction, etc.
v. Not a burden, but a benefit to man, even here.
  The parapet.*
vi. Divided into
  a. Positive: requiring a thing to be done: *e.g.* the 4th.
  b. Negative: forbidding a thing to be done: *e.g.* the 7th.
  The stream and its banks.†

vii. Binding
  a. On all men, unlike human laws.
  b. Each and every commandment:
    "Whosoever shall offend in one point is become guilty of all." Jas. ii. 10.
    One instrument out of tune destroys a whole concerted piece.
    One weak link weakens the whole chain.
viii. Therefore possible to all.
  a. God is wisdom, goodness, and justice.
  b. He does not, can not, exact the impossible.
  c. Grace is given to enable us to observe His Law.
  d. The Saints have kept it, so may we.
ix. Confirmed by Christ in the New Law:
  a. By His teaching and doctrine.
  b. By His example in life.
  c. By His sending the Holy Ghost.

Lessons:

i. Learn, understand and love the commandments.
ii. Humility, in submission and obedience to them.
iii. Petition for grace in temptation against them.
iv. Heaven the reward of observing them.

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* If on a narrow plank, crossing a ravine, a parapet is raised on either side, so that a traveller cannot fall into the abyss, unless he deliberately leap over it, no one would consider its erection a piece of tyranny, or an unreasonable curtailment of his freedom and liberty: on the contrary, it is a benefit bestowed to secure his safety. So with man, on his way to eternity, the Commandments are a protection to him, as he passes along the plank of life, guarding him against falling into the deep abyss of Hell.—*Gaume.*

† The positive precepts are like so many different streams, conveying the riches of a fountain to various parts of the earth. The negative are like banks, hindering the passions from troubling the waters, and turning them out of their course.—*Gaume.*

27. PURITY OF INTENTION.

"All things do ye in the name of the Lord." Col. iii. 17.

i. God created all things for His glory.
ii. We should do all for the same motive.
iii. Such practice useful to our own souls also.

The Glory of God:

i. Much of it is lost on earth,
   a. By the sins of men.
   b. Through forgetfulness of God.
   c. Even good people giving God the second place. Under show of moderation, human respect, etc.
ii. Zeal of Our Lord to procure His Father's glory: *e.g.*
   His stay among the doctors: Lke. ii. 49.
   His labours for souls.
   His agony over sin: Mth. xxvi.
iii. We also should seek God's glory: *e.g.* by

Purity of Intention:

i. Doing even our most trifling acts for God: *e.g.*
   a. Rising, eating, labour, pain, pleasure.
   b. No matter how trivial the act, heavenly motives sanctify it.
ii. Through the offering we make of them to God:
   a. On waking, for the whole day.
   b. And again before our chief actions.
iii. Principle grounded on Our Lord's promise.
   The cup of cold water: Mth. x. 42.
iv. Turns all we do into merit for eternity.
   A true "philosopher's stone."
   a. Most of the Saints sanctified through their common actions.

b. These done with extraordinary fervour and good motive.

c. We thus "pray without ceasing." 1 Thess. v. 17.

v. If the Saints could grieve, it would be over loss of glory, through neglect of this practice.

vi. The pity we should fail in this!

a. Our labours *have* to be performed.

b. Our sufferings *have* to be borne.
Why not thus sanctify both?

c. Our pleasures in no way diminished by it.
S. Charles playing chess.*

vii. This spirit of oblation begets tender familiarity with God.
The childlike freedom of the Saints springs from it.

Lessons:

i. Adopt this truly Catholic and simple practice.
The habit of making the morning offering easily acquired.

ii. Apply it in practice to the whole day, to
"All whatsoever you do, in word or in work."

iii. Atone to God for the glory He is robbed of.
The "A.M.D.G." of S. Ignatius.†

iv. So increase daily your merit for eternity.

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* When others were saying what they would forthwith begin to do, if they knew that they should die within an hour, S. Charles Borromeo said he should go on with a game of chess he was engaged in, for he began it simply for God's glory, and he desired nothing better than to be called away in the midst of an action begun for the glory of God.—*Faber.*

† To excite himself and his disciples to do all for God, S. Ignatius ever kept before him the words: *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*—the motto now of the Society of Jesus.

28. MUSIC IN THE CHURCH.

"In hymns and spiritual canticles, singing . . . to God." Col. iii. 16.

i. The fine arts thrive best as handmaids of Religion.
ii. Among them all, the Church especially interests herself in Music.
iii. The voice of Praise, the earth's answer to its Maker's word of Creation.

Music (Vocal and Instrumental):

i. Always, and everywhere part of Divine Worship.
Expressing gratitude, joy, sorrow, etc.
ii. Common among the Hebrews: *e.g.*
The Canticle of Moses, the oldest recorded. Ex. xv.
Especially David's psalms, called the "Book of Praise."
Choirs of Levites in the Tabernacle: 1 Par. xxiii. 5.
Dedication of the Temple: 2 Par. vii. 6.
Harps, cymbals and trumpets: 1 Par. xiii. 8.
iii. The Christian religion has always used Music: *e.g.*
The Introit, *Kyrie*, etc., in the Liturgy.
Vespers, Benediction, etc.
a. As authorized by Our Lord.
Angels sang at His birth: Lke. ii. 14.
"Hosanna," on His entry into Jerusalem: Jn. xii. 13.
He rebuked the Pharisees for condemning this: Mth. xxi. 16.
b. Recommended by the Apostle:
S. Paul to the Ephesians, v. 19: to the Colossians, iii. 16.
S. John's vision of Heaven: Apoc. v. 9.
iv. The Church has a style of Music her own:
As shown by many decrees and regulations.
a. Plain Chant, parts coming down from the days of the Temple.

b. *Chorale Style*, after the Palestrina school, 16 c.
c. *Figured music* tolerated, if grave and devotional.
S. Cecily, Patroness of Church Music: Nov. 22.

v. Objects of using music in Church Services:
a. To give glory to God.
b. To give edification to our neighbour.
Experience of S. Augustine.*
c. To devote all our talents to the service of Him who gave them.

vi. All should take part, if possible, in the singing in Church.
a. God's praise and love must of course come from the heart. But,
b. Our voices are from God, therefore use them to His glory.
c. He requires the homage of the whole man, body and soul.
d. Hence prayer in song the best form of praise.
Qui bene cantat bis orat.
e. Congregational singing much to be desired:
1. Expressing spiritual joy of the hearts of the Faithful.
2. Exciting to fervour and devotion.
f. Even if we understand not the words, we know their object.
A statue gives honour to God's house.

Lessons:

i. Join in the public singing and prayers of the Church.
ii. Consider it a privilege to take a share in the services.
iii. Exert your influence in favour of true ecclesiastical music.
"Psallite sapienter." Ps. xlvi. 8.

* "What tears did I shed, under the powerful emotion caused by listening in Thy Church to the hymns and canticles sung to the glory of Thy name! While these sounds struck my ears, Thy Truth flowed into my heart, exciting within me the deepest piety." —*Confess.* ix.

29. PRAYER FOR EACH OTHER.

"Making a remembrance of you in our prayers." 1 Thess. i. 2.

i. The Apostle here gives us the example of thoughtful charity.
ii. Consider this practice of praying for each other.

We are all brethren:

i. All children of the same Father.
ii. Hence the wants of others should be to us as our own.
When one member of our body suffers, all suffer.
iii. In the epistles, the Faithful are styled "Brethren."
iv. We should help each other as members of the same family.
This especially by prayer.

Prayer for others:

i. Recommended
a. By Our Lord's own words.
"Our Father," (not "my"): Mth. vi. 9.
b. By the Apostle:
"Pray one for another:" Jas. v. 16.
c. By the practice of the Church:
"Pray for us," (plural) in the Litanies.
ii. Avails more than prayer for ourselves only.
Because thus accompanied by charity for others.
iii. This intercessory prayer
a. Tends to advance the glory of God.
b. Brings many graces to souls.
iv. Persons for whom we should pray:
a. Those in sin, or outside the Church.
Practice of S. Teresa.*

b. Those in lukewarmness or tepidity.
c. Those in sorrow, spiritual or temporal.
d. The sick and the dying.
How much depends on the hour of death!
e. Our relations, friends, and benefactors.
f. Even our enemies: Mth. v. 44.

v. Founded on the dogma of the Communion of Saints. Hereby the Faithful may assist each other by prayer and good works.

Examples:

Job prayed for his friends: Job xlii. 8.
Judith, asking for prayers: Jud. viii. 31.
Jeremiah, for Israel: Jer. xiv. 11.
The Church, for S. Peter: Acts xii. 5.
S. Paul asks for prayers: Rom. xv. 30.
Our Lord, for His disciples: Jn. xvii. 11.
Also for His enemies: Lke. xxiii. 34.
S. Stephen, for Saul: Acts vii. 59.

Lessons:

i. Imitate this practice of the Apostle.
ii. Hesitate not to ask for prayers.
iii. When promising prayers to others, don't fail to say them.

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* S. Teresa gives this as a reason for founding her convents that, as there are so many that offend God, nuns ought to pray for their conversion, especially for the defenders of the Church, for preachers and learned men who maintain its truth. She spent whole nights praying and weeping for the conversion of souls, especially those infected with heresy.—*Faber.*

30. THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

"Before God and our Father." 1 Thess. i. 3.

i. S. Paul reminds the Thessalonians of their work "before God," *i.e.* of their work as done in God's presence.

ii. Take occasion to consider the practice of the presence of God.

Motives:

i. Equity:

a. We must not forget a friend.

"Forget not thy friend in thy mind." Ecclus. xxxvii. 6.

b. Still less, God to whom we owe so much. Jas. i. 17.

ii. Examples of the Saints of all ages:

Henoch walked with God: Gen. v. 24.
Noah, in like manner: Gen. vi. 9.
Abraham and Isaac: Gen. xlviii. 15.
The Patriarchs ever spoke of God.

"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Mth. xii. 34.

Saints of the New Law, as seen in their lives and writings.

iii. A restraint in temptation:

a. Impossible to commit grievous sin, if we remember God's presence,

1. Who sees our every action and thought.
2. Who holds in His hand the thread of our lives.
3. Who has power to cast us into Hell: Lke. xii. 5.

No one would dare to break the law under the very eyes of his King!

b. How should we act in presence of some great one of the earth?

Even the pagan Seneca recognized the force of this thought.

c. If God manifested Himself visibly, who would dare to resist?

d. Yet Faith should remind us of His real presence, though invisible, and so restrain passion.

Joseph under temptation: Gen. xxxix. 9.

Conversion of S. Thais: Oct. 8.

iv. Powerful incentive to virtue.*

"Walk before Me and be perfect." Gen. xvii. 1.

a. God sees also and will reward our good works.

The cup of cold water: Mth. x. 42.

b. Such thought encourages to do good.

c. Especially helpful in prayer, against distraction.

v. A great comfort in affliction.

a. God watches our combats with evil.

S. Antony amid temptation: Jan. 17.

b. He beholds our sufferings and trials.

Job and his many crosses.

c. If borne for God, these too become meritorious.

d. God seeing us thus, tempers the trial: 1 Cor. x. 13.

Lessons:

i. Exercise the presence of God, by

a. Remembrance of Bethlehem, or Calvary, or the Blessed Sacrament, etc.

b. Lively faith in His real presence around us.

Especially in temptation and trial.

ii. Make occasional use of pious ejaculations.

iii. Morning offering of all to God.

iv. Have some special occasions for thinking of His presence, each day.

* No building can be raised to any great height, unless it rest on a solid foundation. In like manner, the practice of Perfection can never rise to any high degree, except it be based on the groundwork of the Divine Presence, ever borne in mind.—*Saint Jure.*

31. GOD'S FAVOURS TO HIS PEOPLE.

i. The epistle names some of God's mercies to His people.
ii. These typical of His mercies to us.

Our fathers were all under the cloud:

i. The cloud spoken of in Exodus xiii.
ii. A cloud by day, against the sun's rays in the desert.
iii. A pillar of fire by night, to give light.
iv. For forty years it went before the Jews as their guide.
An angel in charge of it, to direct its movements.
v. Leaving Egypt under its guidance, the Jews reached the sea.

All passed through the sea:

i. The N.W. arm of the Red Sea.
ii. The cloud standing between the Jews and the Egyptians.
To the former a light; to the latter, darkness.
iii. Moses stretched his rod over the sea, and the waters divided.
iv. The Hebrews crossed safely during the night.
v. In the morning, the Egyptians seeing this, followed; but,
vi. The waters closed in, and not one of them escaped.
vii. Canticle of Moses, the most ancient recorded: Ex. xv.

All were baptized in the cloud and the sea:

i. The cloud, type of the Holy Ghost.
a. The *light* of God to our path, as the cloud was to the Jews.
b. The *love* of God, cooling our passions, as the cloud did the sun's rays!
ii. Passage of the Red Sea, type of Baptism, in which
a. Our souls are reddened in the Blood of Our Redeemer.

b. Concupiscence and passion are cooled down.
c. Moses is type of Our Lord, the leader of His people.
d. The rod a type of the Cross.
e. Pharao and his Egyptians, type of the Devil and his angels.
f. Israel represents those who receive Baptism.

All received the same spiritual food and drink:

i. Good and bad fed on the manna.
Type of the Holy Eucharist, our spiritual food.
ii. Good and bad drank the water from the rock.
Type of the Precious Blood, quenching passion and sin.
iii. The spiritual (typical) rock is Christ Our Lord.*

With most of them God not well pleased:

i. In spite of such mercies, the Jews often rebelled.
ii. Hence God was not pleased with them:
a. Only two of their great number reached Cana: Numb. xiv. 30.
b. The carcases of the rest were strewn in the wilderness: Numb. xiv. 29.
iii. Lessons for ourselves.
a. God bestows many blessings on us of every kind. But we must not presume on His favours of the past.
b. Let us be grateful, and order our lives accordingly.
c. Especial care due to the Bl. Eucharist, to be received shortly.
d. Otherwise we may commit sacrilege and perish. Being excluded from the true land of Cana Heaven.

* A Jewish tradition says that the rock struck by Moses miraculously followed the Hebrews and wandered about with them, supplying them with water for their daily wants, till they reached the Promised Land. Numb. xxi. 16.

32. THE THREE ENEMIES OF THE SOUL.

i. S. Paul reminds the Corinthians of their famous public games.
Most expressive to them of the value of a prize.
ii. From this idea he exhorts them to strive for the eternal prize.
iii. *We* also have to struggle and fight: our chief enemies are three, viz.:

I. The Devil:

i. Created in innocence, but subjected to a trial.
ii. Fall of one-third of the Angels, and their punishment: 2 Pet. ii. 4.
iii. Now suffering the pain of loss and fire, for ever.
iv. Occupied
  a. In cursing and blaspheming God.
  b. In tempting men to sin,
    1. Through hatred of God.
    2. Through envy of man.
    3. Through enmity to all that is good.
  c. In accusing souls before the Judgment Seat.
v. They tempt unceasingly to all and every sin.
  a. Those especially who are aiming at perfection.
  b. According to the inclinations of each one tempted.
  c. With the cunning and experience of long ages.
vi. To be resisted by prayer, and the sign of the Cross.

II. The World: *i.e.*

i. The maxims of the world: *e.g.*
  a. Earthly pleasure man's true happiness.
  b. Wealth to be got at any price.
  c. Injuries to be returned.
  d. Poverty to be despised.

ii. Society of those who love vanities, riches and pleasures more than God.
iii. Maxims which are false and opposed to those of the Gospel.
iv. To be overcome by contempt for worldly custom, by moral courage.

III. **The Flesh:**

i. Our own bodies and the senses.
ii. Hankering after ease and forbidden pleasures.
iii. Corrupt from the time of Adam's fall.
iv. Most dangerous, because
  a. Always with us.
  b. Alluring most powerfully to sin.
v. Yet we must not be discouraged, for
  a. Such temptations may result merely from past sin.
  b. If borne in patience, they atone for sin.
  c. They are perhaps the punishment of our pride.
  d. Many Saints have been assaulted by them.
    S. Paul: 2 Cor. xii. 7.
    S. Mary of Egypt: Apl. 9.
    S. Jerome: Sept. 30.
    S. Francis of Assisi: Oct. 4.
vi. To be subdued by mortification and penance.

Lessons:

i. Know well the enemies of the soul; then,
ii. To overcome them,
  a. Watch against occasions of sin.
  b. Pray for God's aid and strength.
  c. Fight by positive efforts at resistance.
iii. "So run that you may obtain."

33. SCANDAL.

"Who is scandalized and I am not on fire?" 2 Cor. xi. 29.

i. To take the bodily life of another is a crime crying vengeance.

ii. To destroy the spiritual life of the soul, a more grievous crime.

For the soul is more precious than the body.

iii. Well may the Apostle display his anguish at the thought of scandal.

iv. Yet scandal is a most common sin, worthy of serious consideration.

Scandal:

i. Any word, deed or omission, calculated to lead others to sin.

ii. Most sinful, because of our proneness to imitate evil.

iii. They are guilty of scandal, who

a. Counsel evil, or provoke to it: *e.g.*
Anger through raillery; or theft, etc.

b. Teach or suggest evil: *e.g.*
By indecent dress, act or language.

c. Ridicule piety and virtue in others;
Which advances the reign of wickedness.

d. Give bad example to those under their charge:
Parents, by cursing, quarrelling, etc.

iv. The grievousness of scandal seen thus:

a. It does the work of Satan, who tries to ruin souls.

b. It undoes the work of Christ, who came to save them.

c. It contains a two-fold guilt: viz. against
1. The love we owe to God and our neighbour.
2. The virtue violated, or likely to be.

d. Its effects may extend to all time, as ripples spread on the water.
Examples of Luther, Henry VIII.
Irreligious and immoral writings.

e. Hear the curses uttered against it:

"Wo to that man by whom the scandal cometh." Mth. xviii. 7.

"Wo to you . . . because you shut the kingdom of Heaven." *Ib.* xxiii. 13.

v. Nothing causes greater fear in death than the thought of scandal given.
Berengarius.*
Yet how common in the world, in various forms!

Reparation of Scandal:

i. As necessary, where possible, as in the case of injustice.
ii. Often most difficult, as the evil can seldom be reached.
iii. Yet something may and must be done: *e.g.*
a. Retractation of the evil committed.
b. Good example for the future. Mth. v. 16.
c. Prayer for the scandalized; and
d. Penance and self-denial, to appease God's anger.

Lessons:

i. Try to realize the terrible nature of Scandal!
ii. Know that it may be given by the open neglect of Religion: *e.g.*
Omission of Sunday Mass, Easter Communion.
iii. Make what reparation you can for the past.
iv. Avoid it now, for the future: our own sins are enough for us; and,
v. Pray for the success of Our Lord's work in souls.

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* Berengarius, in the xith c. denied the Real Presence and brought many others into his error. On his death-bed, he was seized with a great fear. "I am about to appear," he exclaimed, "before the judgment seat of Christ: for my own sins I hope for pardon: but for the sins I have made others commit, I have the greatest fear: I tremble lest I be lost, for I know not how to repair the evil I have done."—*Power*.

34. JOY IN TRIBULATION.

"Gladly will I glory in my infirmity." 2 Cor. xii. 9.

i. These the words of S. Paul, after relating his trials and God's promise of grace.
ii. We also should endeavour to rejoice in trials.
iii. Two kinds call for consideration.

I. **Spiritual Trials**: *e.g.* temptations: *i.e.*

i. Whatever may lead us to offend God.
ii. Not sinful in themselves, but only when consented to. Our Lord Himself was tempted: Mth. iv.
iii. Of various kinds: viz. from the Devil, the World, the Flesh.
iv. Serve many good purposes: *e.g.*

a. To keep us humble.

"Lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me." 2 Cor. xii. 7.

b. To show our weakness and the power of grace.

"What doth he know that hath not been tried." Ecclus. xxxiv. 9.

c. To enrich us: every temptation overcome means fresh merit.

Saints have prayed for temptations and grace to bear them.

d. To atone for past sin, from which they sometimes spring.

An encouragement to bear them.

v. Thus, though a trial, they must not depress or discourage.

"Count it all joy when you shall fall into divers temptations." Jas. i. 2.

Because of the good they may do you.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." Jas. i. 12.

II. **Temporal Trials**: *e.g.*

i. Sickness and Suffering:

a. Robust health not always the best thing for holiness.

S. Teresa: Oct. 15.*

b. The soul often stronger and more detached in weak health.

c. God's power made perfect in our infirmities, by His grace enabling us to bear them.

Job, in his many trials.

S. Lidwina, in sickness for 38 years. Apl. 14.

ii. Our daily toil:

a. We all have something to bear.

Rich and poor alike; high and low.

b. Each one has duties to fulfil and corresponding difficulties.

c. Here also God's Grace will strengthen and assist us.

d. No state of life in which God's power may not shine forth: *e.g.*

Kings: S. Louis, Aug. 25: S. Edward, Oct. 13.

Servants: S. Zita, Apl. 27.

Soldiers: S. George, Apl. 23: S. Maurice, Sept. 22.

High Rank: S. Jane de Chantal. Aug. 21.

e. Perfection consists in doing our ordinary actions extraordinarily well.

iii. Similarly, other trials: *e.g.* loss of fame, wealth, friends, etc.

Rejoice and be glad in their midst, like the Apostle.

Lessons:

i. As trials are the lot of each one, bear them cheerfully.

a. So to sanctify them and render them meritorious.

b. So to lighten their weight.

ii. Grace will enable us to bear them all.

iii. Grace given to those who rightly seek it.

* S. Teresa had a great desire to die, that she might be speedily united to God, but this her desire was tempered by an ardent longing to suffer for His love. Her prayer was: "To die or to suffer: I beg no other thing for myself." Her request was granted, and by years of patient suffering in mind and body, she rose to great heights of sanctity.—*Her Life.*

35. THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES.

"Faith, Hope, Charity." 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

i. These the three theological virtues.
ii. The greatest of these is Charity; for, in Heaven,
  a. *Faith* will be exchanged for vision.
  b. *Hope*, for fruition and possession; but,
  c. *Charity* shall remain for ever.
iii. Consider now the first two of these.

Theological Virtues:

i. So called (from the Greek), because relating immediately to God.
ii. Placed at the head of the virtues, as the noblest of all.
iii. Infused into the soul in Baptism.
iv. Strengthened by the worthy reception of other Sacraments.
v. Excel all other virtues, which must find their root herein.
vi. Acts of these virtues should be made, *e.g.*
  a. When we come to the use of reason.
  b. Frequently in life.
  c. In temptations against them.
  d. In the hour of danger and death.

Faith:

i. Supernatural belief in God and His revealed truth.
ii. Absolutely necessary for salvation.

"He that believeth not shall be condemned." Mrk. xvi. 16.
"Without faith it is impossible to please God." Heb. xi. 6.

iii. Lost by apostasy, heresy and wilful doubts.
Oftentimes not regained.

iv. Exercised by
  a. Formal acts of the virtue.
  b. Acts of Religion: *e.g.* attendance at Church.
  c. Open profession of it: *e.g.* observance of fast-days.
v. Effects of Faith:
  a. It is a foundation of the other virtues.
  b. It gives merit to our good deeds.
  c. It is the source of our victory over the world. 1 Jn. v. 4.
vi. Examples:
  Abraham, sacrificing his son: Gen. xxii. 8.
  The Martyrs, dying rather than deny it.
  The Confessors, suffering for professing it.

Hope:

i. Supernatural confidence that God will give us salvation and all means necessary to it.
ii. Necessary for salvation:
  "Without Me you can do nothing." Jn. xv. 5.
  "We are saved by hope." Rom. viii. 24.
iii. Lost by grievous sins of presumption and despair.
iv. Exercised by:
  a. Formal acts of the virtue.
  b. Prayer and petition.
  c. Courage and patience in trial.
v. Effects of Hope:
  a. Resolution in the service of God.
  b. Triumph over temptation and difficulty.
  c. Peace of mind in trouble and pain.
vi. Examples:
  Job, in his trials: Job xiii. 15.
  David, throughout the psalms.
  The woman, touching Our Lord's garment. Mth. ix. 21.

Resolution to exercise these virtues, as necessity may require.

36. CHARITY.

"The greatest of these is Charity." 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

i. The whole of to-day's Epistle sings the praises of Charity.
ii. Its excellence is established on the ground of
  a. Its necessity for salvation: (verses 1, 2, 3).
  b. Its utility: (4—7), and
  c. Its perpetuity even throughout eternity: (8—13).
iii. Study this "Queen of Virtues," in its two-fold branch: viz.

I. Charity towards God:

i. Supernatural love of God above all things.
ii. Essential to salvation.

"If I have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

iii. Lost by any grievous sin, but especially by hatred of God.
iv. Exercised and shown by:
  a. Formal acts of the virtue.
  b. Observance of God's commandments: Jn. xiv. 15.
  c. Obedience to the laws of the Church: Lke. x. 16.
  d. Frequent thought of God: Mth. vi. 21.
  e. Willingly speaking of Him: Lke. vi. 45.
  f. Opening the heart to Him: Judg. xvi. 15.
  g. Doing His will: Jn. xiv. 31.
  h. Repentance for sin.
v. Effects:
  a. Zeal for God's honour and glory.
  b. Sorrow for sin.
  c. Esteem of grace.
  d. Joy, strength and merit.

vi. Examples:

Abraham, offering his son: Gen. xxii.
Joseph, preferring prison to sin: *Ibid.* xxxix.
The three children, refusing to adore idols: Dan. iii.
Susanna, in temptation: *Ibid.* xiii.
Magdalen's repentance: Lke. vii. 47.

II. Charity towards man:

i. Love of our neighbour in and for God.
ii. As necessary as love of God.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Mth. xxii. 39.
"I command you, that you love one another." Jn. xv. 17.

iii. Lost by grievous sins of hatred, envy, injustice, etc.
iv. Shown by:

a. Exercise of the works of mercy.
b. Congratulation, or sympathy, with others.
c. Willingness to oblige.
d. Repression of rancour, ill-feeling, etc.

v. Examples:

Abraham and Lot: Gen. xiii.
David, fighting for his people: 1 Kgs. xvii. 36.
Judith, before Holophernes: Jud. xiii.
Esther, interceding for her people: Esth. vii.
Mary, visiting S. Elizabeth: Lke. i. 39.
S. Martin, ready to live and labour: Nov. 11.

Lessons:

i. Observe this beautiful law of Charity.

"There are two precepts, but only one Charity." *S. Aug.*

ii. It is a matter, not of counsel but, of strict obligation.
iii. Salvation depends on the observance of it in its two-fold form.

37. ABUSE OF GRACE.

"Receive not the grace of God in vain." 2 Cor vi. 1.

i. Words appropriate to the time of Lent, "an acceptable time."
ii. They should lead us to spend it in the right spirit.

Actual graces:

i. Transient divine influences, enabling us to avoid evil and do good.
ii. Of two kinds:
  a. Exterior: e.g. a mission, good example, sermons:
    Nathan, in regard to David: 2 Kgs. xii. 7.
    Jonas, as to the Ninevites: Jon. iii.
  b. Interior: e.g. inspirations of the Holy Ghost, remorse.
iii. Of these we have all received in abundance: *e.g.*
    Calls of the priest.
    Warnings of sickness or misfortune.
    This Lent, a further grace.
iv. What profit have we drawn from them?
  a. Have we improved?
  b. Are we resolved on a better future?
v. God has numbered the graces of each one.
    "Thou hast ordered all things in measure and number and weight." Wisd. xi. 21.
  a. He numbers the flowers, the insects, the births of men, etc.
  b. So also His graces, to some more, to others less.
    To all sufficient, and in all justice.
vi. Hence the need of the warning given in the text.

Abuse of grace:

i. Many neglect the graces offered them: *e.g.*
They heed not the voice of the priest.*
They seize not the occasions of mercy: *e.g.* Lent.
They stifle the voice of conscience.

ii. A time comes when God will give no more.
Pharao, after repeated warnings, was ruined.

iii. Threats of God against this abuse:
The ungrateful guest: Mth. xxii. 13.
The barren fig-tree: Lke. xiii. 7.
Jerusalem: Lke. xix. 44.

iv. Let *us* then beware.
a. This Lent will be the last for thousands.
b. To all it is a time of grace; therefore,
"Harden not your hearts." Ps. xciv. 8.

v. Abuse of grace hardens the heart.
a. Grace makes no further impression.
b. Further graces are withheld; then
c. Final impenitence follows, and eternal loss.

Lessons:

i. Pray God to impress upon you the value of grace.

ii. Resolve to spend Lent well: so,
a. To repair the past; and
b. To guard against future relapse.

iii. Profit by this time of grace, and deserve others.
These will lead to final perseverance and eternal salvation.

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* During a mission given in a large town of the north of England, one great sinner was repeatedly urged to attend it, and make his peace with God—one more grace offered to him. Despite all entreaties, however, he refused and never went near. Only a fortnight after the mission was ended, he took very suddenly ill, and sent for the priest. The latter hastened to the house with all speed, but only to find, on his arrival, that the unhappy man had already breathed his last!

38. THE ACCEPTABLE TIME.

"Behold now is the acceptable time." 2 Cor. vi. 2.

Now the acceptable time:

i. The present moment: but when will men understand?

ii. They put off their conversion to God,

a. Thinking some future day more befitting.
Yet St. Paul distinctly says "now."

b. Thinking conversion will be easier.
1. Yet the older the tree, the deeper its roots.
2. So also with our passions.

c. Presuming on the mercy of God.
But He has not promised mercy to the presumptuous.

iii. Danger of delay.

a. When grace calls, *then* is the acceptable time.

b. It is often given only for a moment, and must then be seized.

c. If not accepted, it is lost, and another may not be given.
Death in the Hospital.*

d. Hence the warning—not to receive it in vain.

iv. Therefore delay not.

a. The present is all we can call our own.

b. Death-bed repentance is seldom sincere.

Lent an acceptable time:

i. God, however, chooses certain times, as seasons of special grace.

ii. Lent is one of them, in which conversion is easier:

a. In the springtime, when all things revive.
A time for fresh beginnings on our part.

b. Special graces given to the united penance and prayer of the whole Church.

c. Special invitation to repentance, through the command to receive the Sacraments.

d. Often special services and instructions.

iii. A time for penance and repentance.

iv. Christian penance means, broadly, repentance for sin.

a. Internal:

1. Detestation of sin in the past.
2. Resolution against future relapse.
3. Conversion of the heart to God, as with the Prodigal.

b. External:

1. Watchings, fastings, daily toil.
2. Sickness and suffering, anxieties.

v. Penance necessary to all: Lke. xiii. 3.

a. No sinner ever entered Heaven, except through penance.

b. The lost in Hell are there through lack of it.

c. Thus the sinner must choose between repentance and damnation.

vi. Because of its special helps, Lent truly an "acceptable time."

Lessons:

i. Resolve to utilize this holy Season.

a. Practices of prayer, fasting, almsdeeds.

b. Attendance at services and instructions.

c. Worthy reception of the Sacraments.

ii. Do not risk salvation, through delay of repentance. This may be the last offer of divine mercy!

* A priest, visiting one day the wards of a hospital, came across a patient for the first time who was evidently seriously ill; he admitted having neglected all religion for over 30 years, yet persistently refused to make his confession; after repeated endeavours to this end, the priest at last had to leave: but an hour later, that man was dead, and had answered to God for that neglected grace!

39. SANCTIFICATION OF THE SOUL.

"This is the will of God—your sanctification." 1 Thess. iv. 3.

i. The whole duty of man is to do God's will.
ii. God's will is that we sanctify and save our souls.
iii. See some *motives* and *means* of doing this.

Motives for Sanctification:

i. The fact of our *Creation* imposes this duty on us.
   a. The very object of our existence is that we may attain to God.
   b. God, as our Creator, demands sanctity of us:
      "Be ye holy, because I . . . am holy." Lev. xix. 2.
ii. Our *Redemption* requires it.
   a. Our Lord came from Heaven to secure salvation.
   b. He delivered Himself for the Church, that He might sanctify it: Eph. v. 26.
   c. He calls us to perfection:
      "Be you perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Mth. v. 48.
   d. To aid us herein, He has given us
      1. His own example to copy.
      2. The Sacraments, as channels of His grace. Especially those of Penance and Holy Eucharist.
      3. The Sacrifice of the Mass.
      4. His Church, with all its varied helps.
iii. Our future *Glorification* presupposes it:
   a. The promise made to Abraham holds for us.
      "Be perfect . . . I am thy reward exceeding great." Gen. xvii. 1: xv. 1.
   b. The greater our perfection here, the greater our glory hereafter.
   c. The Saints appreciated this truth: hence their strenuous efforts at sanctifying their souls.

Means to Sanctification:

i. To *desire* it ardently:
   a. We never attain to a thing, unless we desire it.
   b. It is the hungry that God fills with good things: Lke. i. 53: Mth. v. 6.

ii. To *seek* it earnestly:
   a. Acting like the man finding the pearl: Mth. xiii. 46.
   b. Taking practical steps about it, *e.g.*
      1. Fervent prayer: Wisd. vii. 7.
      2. Spiritual Reading:
         Conversion of S. Ignatius: Jly. 31.
         Conversion of S. Augustine: Aug. 28.
      3. Study the example of the Saints.*
         "What these have done, canst thou not do, my soul?" *S. Aug.*

iii. To *persevere* in pursuit of it:
   a. When a man has found a mine, he does not then cease to labour.
   b. S. Paul thought not of the past, but stretched forth to the future: Phil. iii. 13.
   c. Not to go on is to lose ground.
      Like the boat on the rapid stream.

Lessons:

i. Consider well the absolute necessity of salvation.
ii. Naught else avails without it: Mth. xvi. 26.
iii. To secure salvation hereafter, sanctification is necessary now.
iv. Practical thoughts on this, during Lent.

* Noah, on the testimony of the Scripture itself, was a just and perfect man, and therefore found grace before the Lord: Gen. vi. 9—David was declared to be a man according to God's own heart: Acts xiii. 22—So great was the veneration of S. Francis Xavier for S. Ignatius, that he always wrote to him kneeling—S. Francis himself was so greatly esteemed for his sanctity of life, that immediately after death he was looked upon as a Saint. by Christians and Pagans alike.

40. IMPURITY.

"God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification." 1 Thess. iv. 7.

i. Impurity the ruin of innumerable souls.
ii. As common now as in the days of the Apostle.
iii. Therefore, like him, the priest too must raise a warning voice.

Impurity:

i. Criminal affection for the pleasures of the flesh.
Whether in thought, or word, or deed.
ii. Directly opposed to the sanctity of God, hence so hateful to Him.
The Deluge: Gen. vii.
Destruction of Sodom: Gen. xix.
Death of Onan: Gen. xxxviii. 10.
iii. Opposed to holy purity, so dear to Jesus, who
a. Chose a Virgin Mother: Lke. i. 27.
b. Loved a Virgin disciple: Jn. xiii. 23.
c. Is followed by Virgins in Heaven: Apoc. xiv. 4.
iv. Always a mortal sin, when consented to.
"They who do such things shall not obtain the Kingdom of God." Gal. v. 21.
"Shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire." Apoc. xxi. 8.
v. Effects:
a. Blindness in the *Intellect* to the truths of God.
b. Hardness of *Heart* against grace.
c. Weakness of the *Will* in temptation.
d. Sacrilegious Confessions and Communions.
e. Ruin of bodily health and strength.
A doctor's opinion.*
f. Domestic unhappiness.

g. Cause of other sins: *e.g.*

Of murder, in David: 2 Kgs. ix. 15—In Herod: Mth. xiv. 10.

Of Idolatry, in Solomon: 3 Kgs. xi. 5.

h. Despair and final impenitence.

vi. Remedies:

a. Flight from occasions of every kind.

"In this warfare, cowards win the day." *S. Philip.*

b. Resist with vigour the first attacks of temptation.†

c. Prayer and frequentation of the Sacraments.

d. Mortification and bodily penance.

e. Occupation of mind and body.

f. Practice of the presence of God.

g. Humility and self-distrust.

h. Great devotion to Mary, "Queen of Virgins."

Lessons:

i. Conceive a love of holy purity.

"O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory." Wisd. iv. 1.

ii. Conceive a horror of the opposite vice.

iii. Avoid the causes of it: *e.g.*

a. Idleness.

b. Excess in food and drink.

c. Bad books and companions.

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* A medical man of renown, in a large industrial centre, one day maintained that one of the most destructive battles of Napoleon, frequently repeated in that town, would not destroy as many victims as did debauchery and sin.—*Franco.*

† S. Benedict one day rolled himself among briars and thorns, to repel and overcome an impure temptation—For the same purpose, S. Bernard plunged into a pool of water, in the depth of winter—This was real resistance to evil.

41. COVETOUSNESS.

"No covetous person hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ." Eph. v. 5.

i. S. Paul calls avarice a serving of idols.
ii. Too many nowadays make this their God.
iii. Hence the importance of the subject.

Covetousness, or Avarice:

i. An excessive love of the goods we possess or wish to possess.
ii. Poor as well as rich may be guilty of it.
iii. Increases, the more it is gratified: in old age especially. Making men wretchedly poor in the midst of plenty.
iv. Displays itself in
   a. Hardness of heart to the poor, even to relations.
   b. Niggardliness to one's self.
   c. Indifference to all good works.
   d. Hoarding up money.
   e. Paying debts begrudgingly.
   f. Uneasiness at even trifling losses.
v. Of its nature a grievous sin; for,

   "No covetous person hath inheritance in the kingdom of God." Eph. v. 5.

vi. One of the capital sins, and cause of
   a. Fraud, theft and injustice.
   b. False oaths.
   c. Meanness and treachery.
   d. Oppression of others (*e.g.* sweating).
   e. Worry and anxiety.
   f. Even murder.

vii. Examples:
Achab, coveting Naboth's vineyard: 3 Kgs. xxi.
Judas, selling our Lord: Mth. xxvi.
Ananias and Saphira: Acts v.
A miser buried alive.*

viii. Remedies:
a. Liberality to the Church and the poor, especially in Lent.
b. Consideration of
1. The vanity of things that pass.
2. The shortness of life.
3. The evils of covetousness.
c. Study of the first Beatitude:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit." Mth. v. 3.

Lessons:

i. Think over these points and guard against all forms of avarice.
ii. Confidence in God's Providence, along with reasonable care.
iii. Teach children generosity, and train them
a. To share pleasures with companions, and
b. Their pence with the poor.
iv. Lent is a time for almsgiving.
v. Follow the advice of the Gospel:

"Lay up to yourselves treasures in Heaven." Mth. vi. 20.

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* It is related that a miser once had a subterranean cellar made, with an iron door so cleverly concealed that no one could notice it. Thither he used to retire to contemplate his gold and silver, of which he made his god. One day he forgot to take his key with him, and as the door did not open from within, he was unable to get out, unable even to appeal for help. The missing man was long looked for, when a locksmith remembered making him a special safe, and made the case known. The place was broken into, and there lay the miser's body, all putrified and eaten with worms.—*Baudrand.*

42. DELUSIONS ABOUT REPENTANCE.

"Walk as children of the light." Eph. v. 8.

i. Our Lord is the true light of the world: Jn. i. 9.
ii. Sinners love darkness rather than the light: Jn. iii. 19.
iii. See some of the delusions which mislead them:

First Delusion: God will easily forgive me.

i. Truly, God's mercies are above all His works: Ps. cxliv. 9.
   a. He freely pardons the repenting sinner.
   b. He restores him His grace and friendship.
   c. He continues to shower down many blessings.
ii. But He does not promise grace to those who abuse it.
   "Then shall they call upon Me and I will not hear." Prov. i. 28.
   "The hope of the wicked shall perish." Prov. x. 28.
   "God is not mocked." Gal. vi. 7.
iii. No greater folly therefore than to offend God, because He is merciful.
   a. You don't throw money into the river, because you *may* get it again.
   b. Why plunge the soul into sin, hoping for an uncertain repentance.
iv. Repentance is God's gift, which may be refused.

Second Delusion: Repentance will be easier later on.

i. A fatal error, opposed even to common sense.
   a. A young tree is easily uprooted; not so an old one.
   b. So, temptations yielded to grow stronger as time passes: Jer. xiii. 23.
ii. A later day may never be ours: Prov. xxvii. 1: Mth. xxv. 13.
   a. Death often takes men suddenly:
      1. How many sudden deaths come under our own notice?
      2. Youth and health are no proof against his calls.

b. Why may not this happen any day to ourselves?
c. How criminal to risk salvation on an uncertain future!

iii. God forbids such delay.
"Defer it not from day to day." Ecclus. v. 8.
"Tarry not in the error of the ungodly." Ecclus. xvii. 26.

iv. To listen to such delusion has been fatal to many.
Death in the hospital. (Ex. p. 75).

v. On the contrary, the present is "the acceptable time." 2 Cor vi. 2.
a. God is willing to pardon us *now*, if we repent: 2 Par. xxx. 9.
b. Grace is not refused to those who ask aright: Mth. vii. 7.

vi. In any case, death-bed repentance is always uncertain, often insincere.

Third Delusion: God will bear with me.

i. Thus the devil lulls the conscience of the sinner.
But the Holy Ghost warns us against such presumption: Ecclus. v.

ii. God numbers the sins He will pardon to each one.
As He numbers the flowers and insects on the earth.

iii. When that number is reached, He will at length chastise.
The longer the delay, the more terrible the punishment.
King Antiochus: 2 Mach. ix.

iv. One more sin may fill up the cup of your iniquity.
"Evil-doers shall be cut off." Ps. xxxvi. 9.
"I will repay them *in due time*." Deut. xxxii. 35.

v. How terrible to fall into the hands of the living God! Heb. x. 31.

Lessons:

i. Ponder well such important truths, this holy season.
ii. Resolve to renounce sin *now*, the time of mercy.
iii. Delay in repentance may bring you God's vengeance! Gen. xix. 15.
iv. Fulfil, therefore, worthily the Easter precept.

43. THE EPISTLE.

i. Though not so from the beginning, custom permitted more than one wife.
   a. Partly, the patriarchs were not content with one only.
   b. Partly, this promoted increase in Israel.
ii. Abraham had two wives, of which the epistle speaks.
iii. Study this difficult passage, which is allegorical.

Abraham had two sons:

i. *Ismael*, by a bondwoman, Agar:
   According to the flesh, in the ordinary course of nature.
ii. *Isaac*, by a freewoman, Sara.
   Through the promise made to Abraham: Gen. xvii. 19.

These (Agar and Sara) are the two testaments:

i. The Old Testament of Mt. Sina, represented by *Agar*, a slave.
   a. Sina, a barren, rugged mountain of Arabia.
   b. Law engendering unto bondage.
      Children of slaves were themselves slaves.
   c. Slaves living under the law of fear.
      Fear of temporal evils and punishments.
   d. Herefrom a numerous people sprang up: Gen. xvii. 20: xxi. 13.
ii. The New Testament, promulgated in Jerusalem, typified by *Sara*.
   a. Sara, aged and barren, when God made His promise.
   b. The New Law is the law of grace and love.
   c. The Church teaches the highest and purest motives of action.
   d. The Church has flourished and spread. Hence:

"Rejoice, thou barren, that bearest not." Is. liv. 1.

i. Words prophetic of the Church in the New Law.
ii. During the early persecutions, unable to increase and multiply.

iii. Yet even then Christians were found in the Imperial palace.

iv. "The blood of Martyrs is the seed of Christians." *Tertullian.*

v. Compared with the Synagogue, the Church has been fruitful indeed.

We, as Isaac, children of promise:

i. Isaac, promised to Abraham and Sara in old age: Gen. xvii. 19.

a. Ismael, the elder brother, hated and persecuted him.

b. Though probably reconciled on the death of their father: Gen. xxv. 9.

ii. We also are the children of promise.

We inherit the promises and graces of the New Law.

a. Jews and others have ever persecuted the Church.

b. Possibly they may be reconciled at the end of time: Jer. xxxi. 31: Dan. xii. 1.

One of the signs of the approach of the last day.

What saith the Scripture?

i. Ismael and Agar cast forth from the house of Abraham: Gen. xxi. 10.

a. The Jews and their Synagogue rejected in the New Law.

ii. Ismael excluded by law from the inheritance which fell to Isaac.

b. The Jews deprived of the inheritance of the Church.

iii. Isaac, son of the freewoman, Sara.

c. We are children of the freedom acquired by Christ.

iv. The service of the Old Law

1. Forced men to obey through fear, and
2. Imposed ceremonies and laws in themselves useless to salvation.

d. The liberty of the New Law

1. Leads us to serve God in spirit and truth and love.
2. With sacraments and ceremonies, having power to help us.

Gratitude to God for such favours!

44. FREEDOM OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

"The freedom wherewith Christ has made us free." Gal. iv. 31.

i. On Calvary, Our Lord purchased for us our freedom. Man became once more truly the Child of God.
ii. Consider the meaning of this freedom.

I. Freedom from sin and hell.

"He washed us from our sins in His own Blood." Apoc. i. 5.

i. Adam's sin a most grievous offence against God:
   a. Sin in knowledge and light.
   b. Sin without concupiscence impelling.
   c. Sin of deep ingratitude.
ii. Adam's sin affected all mankind.

"All men sinned in Adam." Rom. v. 12.

   a. All men are born in sin, slaves of the devil.
   b. Men also sin of their own free-will; and,
   c. All share the consequences of sin, in time and eternity.
iii. Adam's sin involved a two-fold punishment:
   a. As to the *Soul:*
      1. Loss of divine grace.
      2. Closing of Heaven's gates.
      3. Eternity of Hell.
   b. As to the *Body:*
      1. Sorrows and suffering: Gen. iii. 16.
      2. Toil and labour: Gen. iii. 17.
      3. Death: Gen. iii. 19.
iv. Our Lord, by His Passion and Death on the Cross,
   a. Has atoned for all sin.
   b. Has given us
      1. Baptism, against original sin.
      2. Penance, against personal sin.
      3. Other Sacraments for other wants.

c. Has softened the asperity of punishment.
1. Bearing our infirmities in Himself.
2. Submitting even to death.

d. Has reopened the gates of Heaven for us.
Thus redeeming us from sin and hell.

II. **Freedom from the devil:**

"That through death, He might destroy the devil." Heb. ii. 14.

i. In olden times, the devil often possessed even the bodies of men.
Sarah, daughter of Raguel: Tob. xii. 14.
The woman held eighteen years: Lke. xiii. 16.

ii. He still has power to tempt and possess souls.
"As a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." 1 Pet. v. 8.

iii. Formerly an object of worship: Deut. xxxii. 17: 1 Cor. x. 20.
Even now again, in Luciferianism.* But,

iv. The Incarnation of Christ
a. Has greatly curbed the devil's power over soul and body.
b. Has merited us strength to resist him.
c. Yet for our good, he is still allowed to tempt us.

Lessons:

i. Thankfulness that we are members of God's Church. Therein we share in this freedom of Christ.
ii. Frequent use of the means of grace thus bestowed.
iii. Compassion and prayer for those deprived of such blessing.

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* Mgr. de Ségur states that in 1848 there was a Masonic Lodge in Rome, where the "mass of the devil" was celebrated in the presence of men and women; each deposited in a ciborium a consecrated host, purchased or received in Church: the sacred elements were stabbed by the whole assembly, who afterwards gave themselves up to orgies, like to the pagan mysteries of old.—*Waite.*

45. CHRIST, OUR HIGH PRIEST.

"A high priest . . . and mediator of the New Testament."
Heb. ix. 11, 15.

i. Explain the idea of Priest and Mediator.
ii. Christ is both, according to the Apostle.

Priesthood befitted Our Lord:

i. A special office of priesthood is to be mediator between God and man.
   a. A priest imparts things divine to men: Mal. ii. 7.
   b. A priest offers the people's prayers to God and atones for their sins: Heb. v. 1.
ii. Thus priesthood was most becoming Our Lord, because
   a. Through Him, divine things are given to man: 2 Pet. i. 4.
   b. Through Him, mankind are reconciled to God: Col. i. 20.

Christ both Priest and Victim: Eph. v. 2.

i. Man needs sacrifice for three ends:
   a. For remission of sin, which separates from God: Heb. v. 1.
   b. For preservation of grace, in which is peace and salvation.
   c. For perfect union of the soul with God in glory.
ii. These three things are ours, through Christ,
   a. Who was delivered up for sin: Rom. iv. 25.
   b. Who became the cause of eternal salvation: Heb. v. 9.
   c. Who acquired for us the fulness of glory: Heb. x. 19.
iii. Thus Christ is both Priest and Victim—
   Holocaust: Sin offering: Peace-offering.
   a. Freely He offered Himself to the Father: Is. liii. 7—Priest.
   b. The sacrifice He offered was His own body—Victim.

Christ's sacrifice expiates sin: Heb. ix. 14.

i. For remission of sin, two things are required:
   a. The *stain* to be blotted out, and the heart turned to God.
   b. The *punishment* to be forgiven by satisfaction being made.
ii. The sacrifice of Christ effects both these:
   a. By Him justifying grace was bestowed: Rom. iii. 24.
   b. He fully atoned for our transgressions: Is. liii. 5.
iii. Christ then had power to expiate sin:
   a. He was priest, not as God but, as man.
   b. But the Divinity and Humanity are united in the one Christ.
   c. Hence His sacrifice is of the highest efficacy, being of infinite value.
iv. The sacrifice of the altar differs from that of Calvary only in form.

The Priesthood of Christ is eternal: Ps. cix. 4.

i. In the priestly office, two things may be considered:
   a. The offering itself of the sacrifice.
   b. The perfection of the offering—gaining the object sought for.
ii. The object of Christ's sacrifice is, not temporal but, eternal good.
   a. In Heaven, He still presents the Father the satisfaction made;
   b. And is ever dispensing the graces obtained for men.
iii. His priesthood thus lasts for time and eternity, in its character and effects.
iv. According to the order of Melchisedeck: Ps. cix. 5.
   a. The name Melchisedeck signifies King of Justice. Christ the Just One: Acts iii. 14.
   b. Melchisedeck was King of Salem, *i.e.* of Peace. Christ is the Prince of Peace, Is. ix. 6.
   c. Melchisedeck offered bread and wine in sacrifice. Christ, in these, offers the sacrifice of the Mass.

During Passiontide, meditate on the Priesthood and Sufferings of Christ.

46. THE NECESSITY OF SACRIFICE.

i. The conclusion of the Epistle shows the need of an atoning sacrifice.
ii. Suitable occasion for speaking on the sacrifice of the Cross and the Mass.
Definition of Sacrifice.*

Necessity of an atoning sacrifice.

i. From the beginning, man was bound to offer sacrifice to God, for Adoration: Thanksgiving: Petition.
ii. After the Fall, a further obligation arose, viz. Satisfaction for sin.
iii. This atonement for transgression must equal the offence.
a. The offence, as against an infinite God, infinitely great.
b. No finite being can make atonement of infinite value.
c. Nothing then remained for man, but the prospect of eternal ruin; for
iv. Adam and Eve, though repenting of their sin, were quite unable to repair its effects.

Sacrifice of the Cross:

i. God, in compassion, offered to man the means of reconciliation:
His own divine Son, victim of infinite merit: 1 Jn. iv. 10.
ii. This Son of God offered Himself a willing victim: Is. liii. 7.
a. Dying, not through weakness of nature, etc.
b. But through violence *ab extra.*

iii. It was expedient that Christ, becoming man, should die: Jn. xi. 50.
  a. To satisfy for the human race condemned to death: Gen. ii. 17.
  b. To prove the reality of His human nature.
  c. To diminish our fear of death: Heb. ii. 15.
  d. To induce us to die spiritually to sin: Rom. vi. 11.
  e. To triumph over death by rising again.
  f. To give us a hope of a similar resurrection.
iv. All this, Christ did by His sacrifice on the Cross. Atoning for sin, and purchasing redemption for man.

Sacrifice of the Mass:

i. This general redemption requires application to individual souls.
ii. *The* great means for this is the Sacrifice of the Mass. Continuation of that of the Cross, though differing in form.
iii. Through this most holy Sacrifice,
  a. We pay to God due homage, as His creatures: Adoration: Thanksgiving: Petition: Satisfaction.
  b. We apply to ourselves the fruits of the Redemption.
  c. We obtain contrition and forgiveness of sin.
  d. We gain graces for the Church *Militant*.
  e. We bring relief to the Church *Suffering*.
  f. We give joy to the Church *Triumphant*.

Lessons:

i. Gratitude to Our Lord for the Sacrifice of atonement.
ii. Show this gratitude practically, by
  a. Appreciation of the Holy Sacrifice.
  b. Sympathy with His sufferings this Passiontide.
  c. Sorrow for sin, their sole cause.
  d. Prayer that the effects of this Redemption may extend.
iii. Realize the need for this atoning Victim, and the utter helplessness of man without it.

* Sacrifice is an offering of some sensible thing, by a lawfully appointed minister, to acknowledge, by its destruction, real or equivalent, the majesty and sovereign power of God, and to proclaim His absolute dominion over every created thing.—*Rock*.

47. THE HUMILITY OF OUR LORD.

"He emptied Himself." Phil. ii. 7.

i. Our Lord submitted to many humiliations from without.

ii. But before that, in becoming man, He humbled Himself in three ways: viz.

I. **He emptied Himself of Glory:**

i. Christ Our Lord was God from all eternity. But He was in time made in the likeness of men.

ii. He was the King of Majesty and Glory in Heaven. "King of Kings and Lord of Lords:" Apoc. xix. 16. But, He took the form of a servant on earth.

iii. He did not thereby lose His Glory.

a. This was impossible, for He cannot cease to be God. But,

b. He veiled that glory under the form of His humanity.

iv. He did not empty Himself through external compulsion. But,

a. Of His own free-will and through love of us.

b. To teach us love of contempt and dishonour.

II. **He emptied Himself of Power:**

i. In His divine nature, He was the God of all power and might: Is. ix. 6.
In His human nature, He became helpless and weak, as the servant of God.

ii. He was the Creator of all things, visible and invisible; but,
He became one of the creatures of God.

iii. As Creator, His name is: "I am who am." Ex. iii. 14.
As creature, it is: "I am not."
For creatures are, and have, nothing except from God.

iv. The creature, unless sustained by the Creator, would return to nothingness.
As light disappears, when the sun withdraws.
v. This annihilation consists:
a. In receiving all and everything from God.
As rays of light receive their being from the sun.
b. (In rational beings,) in obedience and reverence to their Creator.
c. Both these may be predicated of Christ, as Man.
vi. Especially in His Passion, does Our Lord's weakness appear:
a. Abandoned by His Apostles.
b. Forsaken even by the Father: Mth. xxvii. 46.
c. Subject to the insults and power of man.
vii. All, to instil into us a love of abjection.

III. **He emptied Himself of Riches:**

i. In Heaven, Our Lord possessed all treasures and riches. But,
ii. On becoming man,
a. He was born in poverty and want.
b. He was exposed to the inclemencies of the weather.
c. He lived in hardship and toil at Nazareth.
d. He was often without a place of rest. Mth. viii. 20.
e. On the Cross, He died in nakedness and privation.
iii. He taught poverty, as a virtue most dear to Him: Mth. v. 3.
iv. Who was ever born, or lived, or died as poor as He? To teach us to despise riches.

Lessons:

i. Our Lord emptied Himself
a. Of *Glory:* Who then shall be proud?
b. Of *Power:* Who then shall be harsh or domineering?
c. Of *Riches:* Who then shall despise poverty?
ii. In imitation of Our Lord, practise the virtues He practised.*

* "All human glory, indeed all temporal honour, all worldly grandeur, compared with Thy eternal glory, is vanity and foolishness, O my God."—*Imit.* iii. xl.

48. THE HUMILIATIONS OF OUR LORD.

"He humbled Himself." Phil. ii. 8.

i. Humility, the beloved virtue of Our Lord.
ii. He gives us examples of it in His life-long humiliations.
iii. Consider some now, especially in the history of the "Great Week."

Humility of Our Lord:

i. In His *Incarnation:* Lke. i. 38.
   a. Uniting Himself to nothingness, misery and sin.
   b. Retaining the marks thereof through all eternity, in His humanity.
ii. In His *Birth:* Lke. ii. 7.
   a. From a human being.
   b. In poverty and want, though God of all things.
   c. In a home for animals, and that not His own.
iii. At *Nazareth:* Lke. ii. 51.
   a. His foster-father was a poor artisan.
   b. His mother ignored and unknown, though of the royal race.
   c. His life hidden and toilsome.
iv. In His *Ministry:*
   a. He was baptized, as though a sinner.
   b. Twelve poor fishermen were His friends:
      1. Their waywardness and contentions: Lke. xxii. 24.
      2. His patience with them all.
      3. His washing their feet: Jn. xiii. 5.
   c. Insults and opposition from the Scribes, etc.
v. In His *Passion* and *Death:*
   a. The betrayal by Judas: Mth. xxvi. 49.
      1. The pain of such treachery.
      2. Humiliation of being sold for money.
      3. By a friend too, and to His enemies,

b. Jesus receives a blow: Lke. xvii. 64.
1. Indignity of this public insult, so unjust and cruel.
2. Yet He receives it without anger or resentment.

c. His condemnation: Lke. xxiii. 24.
1. Bound as a malefactor.
2. Unjustly accused of crime.
3. Bearing all, in patience and silence.

d. The Scourging, and the Crowning with thorns: Mth. xxvii. 26, 29.
1. Apart the pain, see the ignominy and shame. Disgraceful character of both insults.
2. Derision and mockery of the crowd.

e. The Crucifixion: Mth. xxvii. 35.
1. Form of death reserved only to slaves.
2. Jesus put on a level with thieves: Mth. xxvii. 38.
3. Further blasphemies and insults from His enemies.
4. Instead of striking them dead, He prays: Lke. xxiii. 34.

Lessons:

i. Such thoughts suitable to Holy Week.
a. Jesus had always taught humility in *word.*
b. This week especially, He gives *examples* of it.

ii. Humility, the virtue He tells us to learn of Him: Mth. xi. 29.

iii. Consider Our Lord's sufferings and humiliations,
a. As an encouragement in the midst of your own.
b. As a help towards overcoming pride.
c. As a proof of the greatness of His love.

iv. Meditate on the Passion during these few days.

49. SORROWFUL MYSTERIES OF THE ROSARY.

i. To-day *the* day of suffering for Our Lord.

ii. Fix then your minds awhile on His chief sufferings: They constitute the five sorrowful mysteries.

iii. Such meditation a remedy for our repugnance to suffer.

I. The Agony in the Garden: Mth. xxvi. 39.

i. In Gethsemani, at the foot of Mount Olivet.
Adam sinned in a garden: Christ repairs the evil in a garden.

ii. He kneels and becomes sorrowful unto death, because of
a. The countless sins of men.
b. His love for man and His Father.
c. His approaching sufferings and death.

iii. A mysterious sweat of blood bathes His whole body.

iv. Hence His repeated prayer:
"Let this Chalice pass from Me."
Human will, shrinking from suffering.
"Not as I will, but as Thou Wilt."
Human will, ever subject to the divine.

v. Lesson: the spirit of *Prayer*.
a. None can overcome great temptation without grace.
b. Grace is usually given only in answer to prayer.
c. Pray then in every form of trial.

II. The Scourging at a pillar: Mth. xxvii. 26.

i. Punishment reserved only for the worst of criminals. So ignominious that no Roman might submit to it.

ii. Violence of the soldiers, bribed for the work.
a. Revelations say Our Lord received 5,000 stripes; though,
b. The Jewish Law allowed only 39.

iii. Borne by Our Lord to expiate our sins of the flesh.

iv. Became the origin of taking the discipline.
v. Lesson: the spirit of *Mortification.*
a. As a means of reparation for the past.
b. As a help to perseverance in the future.

III. **The Crowning with thorns:** Mth. xxvii. 29.
i. By the soldiers, but on their own authority only.
ii. To expiate our sins of thought of many kinds.
iii. Conceive the intensity of pain it must have caused.
iv. Lesson: the spirit of *Fortitude,*
To bear the crosses and thorns in our path through life.

IV. **The Carrying of the Cross:** Jn. xix. 17.
i. Type: Isaac, bearing the wood for the sacrifice: Gen. xxii. 6.
ii. In the form of a Latin cross, of heavy, rough oak.
iii. Journey of about a mile.
Its various incidents constitute the "Way of the Cross."
iv. Lesson: the spirit of *Patience* in crosses and trials.
The path of suffering is the only safe way to Heaven.

V. **The Crucifixion:** Mth. xxvii. 38.
i. Type: the Brazen Serpent: Numb. xxi. 9.
ii. Cruelty and roughness of the executioners.
iii. The agonizing pain of the Five Wounds.
iv. The ignominy of such a death, between two thieves.
v. The death of Christ completed the work of our Redemption.
Many wonders in the natural order accompanied it.
vi. Meditation on the Crucifixion a great help to contrition.
vii. Lesson: the spirit of *Self-sacrifice* for
God: our neighbour: our own soul.

Let the thought of your Saviour's sufferings fill your minds this day: it will prepare you for a fuller share in the joys of the Resurrection.

50. THE LAST WORDS ON THE CROSS.

i. Our Lord spoke seven Words, as He hung on the Cross in death.
ii. Consider some of them, as suitable to the anniversary of that death.
iii. Listen with reverence, and learn some lessons therefrom.

"Father, forgive them." Lke. xxiii. 34.

i. Exceeding love of Our Lord shown herein; for,
   a. In the very midst of His sufferings, He prays for His executioners; and,
   b. In them, for us and for all sinners.
ii. God punished the Angels' sin immediately and eternally; while,
   a. For us intercession is made; but,
   b. Revenge may be taken, if we abuse grace to sin the more.
iii. While admitting its necessity, do we practise forgiveness of others?
   a. This is not a counsel, but a command.
   b. If we forgive not, we pass sentence against ourselves.

"Forgive us, *as* we forgive." Mth. vi. 12.

iv. What an encouragement given here to fulfil the precept!

S. John Gualbert: July 12.

"Behold thy son . . . Behold thy Mother." Jn. xix. 26, 27.

i. Our Lord's sufferings increased by the presence of Mary and John!
   Their tears as bitter to Him as the loss of His own Blood.
ii. He here commends His virgin Mother to the virgin Disciple.
   a. Showing His preference for the state of virginity
   b. Yet, all states are good and may approach the Cross. Thus,

iii. Three women were near Jesus, as He died:
  a. Mary Magdalen, type of *beginners.*
  b. Mary of Cleophas, of *proficients.*
  c. Mary, Mother of Jesus, of the *perfect.*
iv. Mary stood by: *Stabat Mater*
  a. In *grief:* as a mother near her suffering child.
  b. In *constancy:* as Mother of God, and full of grace.
  c. Thus pictures wrongly present her as falling, etc.
v. The happiness and honour of S. John thus given to Mary's care!
  We, as represented by him, are also her children.
vi. Show then devotion to her thus given to us by our dying Jesus.
  a. Imitating her virtues, in our various stations in life.
  b. Devotion to Mary, a pledge of salvation.

"I thirst." Jn. xix. 28.

i. *Literally:* through
  a. Want of food, tasting nothing since the last supper.
  b. Exhaustion, and loss of blood.
ii. *Figuratively:*
  a. Longing to complete the work of Redemption.
  b. Desiring more suffering and even death.
iii. Pain, borne to expiate our sins of the palate.
iv. Desires are well-named thirsts: if for
  a. Heavenly things, the source of purest joys even here.
  b. Earthly things, such thirst is truly a torment.
v. Stand amazed at Christ's thirst for your salvation, while you are perhaps so indifferent to it!
vi. Where your treasure is, there also your thirst will be.

"Into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Lke. xxiii. 46.

i. Returning His soul to the hands of its Creator.
ii. As we also should do, in the hour of death.
iii. A good practice to do it every night before sleep; for, There are dangers for both body and soul, even at night.

51. THE RESURRECTION A PLEDGE OF TRIUMPH.

"Christ, our pasch, is sacrificed." 1 Cor. v. 7.

i. Christ had been sacrificed, but He is risen.
ii. On Friday the Church wept over her Saviour on the Cross.
iii. To-day she sings "Alleluias" of joy over His Resurrection.
iv. Celebrate this, the greatest Christian mystery, as a pledge of

I. **Triumph for the Church**: for
  i. It proves Christ to be God, and His teaching divine.
    a. He wrought many miracles during life: *e.g.* . . .
    b. But He ever appealed to this one, as proof of His divinity.
  ii. On this mystery is the Church's teaching based: hence truly,
    "If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain." 1 Cor. xv. 14.
  iii. In the miracle of to-day, recognize the power of the Omnipotent.
    a. The power of man may be great in the arts and sciences: *e.g.* . . .
    b. But he cannot restore life: God alone can do this.
    c. Thus the Resurrection puts the seal of authority on Our Lord's message.
  iv. The Apostles go forth to announce it to the world:
    a. Preaching a Saviour crucified, but risen again.
    b. God's power accompanies them, supplying their deficiencies.
    c. Great therefore is their influence over men.
  v. Yet their work was not in peace: Our Lord's word is verified: Jn. xvi. 20.
    a. Their progress was through conflict and persecution.
    b. The Church has ever had foes, but has triumphed over all.

vi. Our risen Jesus has triumphed for 1,900 years!
  a. Go to His tomb, where His power seemed buried.
  b. He is risen, and has gone forth in triumph: and,
  c. Millions to-day celebrate the glory of His Resurrection.

II. **Triumph for the Christian soul**: for,
  i. Jesus died to save us: and He rose that we might share His glory.
    a. As *cause* of our resurrection, through the same power of God.
    b. As *model*, if we comply with His conditions.
  ii. Most consoling thought for all:
    a. Poverty, sorrows and hardships pass away; and,
    b. If we die in grace, we shall rise in glory.
  iii. To do this, two things are needed: viz.:
    a. To rise from sin by repentance: for,
      1. As in time of grief, rejoicing is unbearable,
      2. So, if any be now in the sorrow of sin, not theirs the joy of to-day.
        α. They are daily nearing death and hell.
        β. Despite success and wealth, honours and friends.
        γ. What are these, if sin be in the heart?
      3. Be wise in time and reflect:
        Rise from sin, then can you rejoice in the Resurrection.
    b. To persevere in grace:
      1. Only to perseverance has reward been promised: Apoc. ii. 10.
        Many in hell once repented, but persevered not.
      2. What avails a long fight, if it end in defeat?
      3. In the world, defeat does not always imply disgrace. But,
      4. In the fight for Heaven, failure means eternal misery.
  iv. Thus is Easter day a pledge of triumph for each of us.

52. NEWNESS OF LIFE.

"Feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."
1 Cor. v. 8.

i. To understand the force of this short Epistle, remember:
   a. The Jews annually observed the feast of the Pasch: Ex. xii. 14, 25.
      In memory of their deliverance from Egypt.
   b. The festival lasted seven days: Ex. xii. 15, and,
   c. No leaven was allowed in the house during that time.
   d. Children were instructed, as to the origin and purpose of all this: Ex. xii. 27.
ii. These things were figures of the New Law: 1 Cor. x. 11. Thus,
   a. The Paschal Lamb was a figure of Christ, immolated for us.
      Thereby redeeming us from sin.
   b. The spiritual "seven days" imply the whole time of life.
   c. During this time, no leaven of sin must be found in us.
iii. *We* also require instruction on these points. Hence:

I. Unleavened bread of "Sincerity":

i. Unleavened bread means: life without admixture of sin.
ii. "Sincerity" here
   a. Opposed to "malice," *i.e.* sin in general; and,
   b. Means sanctity and goodness of life. For,
iii. Christ, our Pasch, has been sacrificed for this end; and,
   a. In His Blood, we are cleansed and saved:
      As the Jews were spared, through the blood of the lamb.
   b. In this Blood, we are delivered from the devil and sin.
      As the Jews were, from the destroying angel.
   c. In this, we are strengthened against future assaults.
   d. This Blood given to our souls especially in Holy Eucharist.

iv. This "bread of sincerity" implies
  a. Sorrow for "malice" in the past.
    Without which there can be no real sincerity.
  b. Resolution against sin and its occasions.
    Nothing more suitable to this Festival.
v. In Lent, we prayed and did penance for our sins.
  a. We must not therefore return to them now:
    1. Otherwise we can have no true resurrection; and,
    2. God's vengeance may overtake us: 1 Cor. xi. 30.
  b. "Sincerity" will give us the joy befitting this day.

"Let us be glad to rejoice therein." Ps. cxvii. 24.

II. Unleavened bread of "Truth":

i. Unleavened bread means again, life without sin.
ii. "Truth," here,
  a. Opposed to "wickedness," sins of fraud and deceit.
  b. Means Christian honesty, in its widest sense.
iii. How common are sins of injustice in the world: *e.g.*
  a. Thefts, bribes and extortion.
  b. Frauds in buying and selling.
  c. Waste of time, or goods, or money.
  d. Calumny and other sins of the tongue.
  e. Cheating, gambling.
  f. Unprincipled strikes.
iv. Possibly, we have been guilty of such in the past. If so,
  a. Sincere repentance now, on beginning a new life.
  b. Restitution and reparation, to the best of our power.
v. Feast now in the unleavened bread of "Truth":
  Ever showing scrupulous honesty, in word and act.

Lessons:

i. Fresh courage from the beauty and joy of the Feast.
ii. Resolution to remain, by God's grace, "a new paste."
  Holy and pure, free from all leaven of sin.

53. SUBDUING THE PASSIONS.

"Whatever is born of God overcometh the world." 1 Jn. v. 4.

i. We are born of God by Faith and Charity in Baptism.

ii. If we would show this, we must overcome our passions.

iii. Consider three means to this end: viz.

I. **The armour** to put on:

i. Confidence in God:

a. David rejected Saul's armour, trusting in God: 1 Kgs. xvii. 39, 45.

b. In the spiritual combat, imitate David, not trusting to self.

ii. Confidence grounded on

a. The divine Goodness and Power.

b. The promises of God:

"God is not as a man that He should lie." Numb. xxiii. 19.

"My words shall not pass." Mth. xxiv. 35.

iii. This full confidence we must have, in order

a. To fight with success.

b. To protect ourselves, as with a shield.

c. To make us irresistible.

"If God be for us, who is against us?" Rom. viii. 31.

II. **The Weapons** to use:

i. With his confidence in God, David also took necessary arms: 1 Kgs. xvii. 40.

ii. We too need arms, viz.: the faithful discharge of religious duties:

a. Meditations, or instruction.

b. Daily prayers, for strength.

c. Mass on Sunday; and oftener.

d. Frequentation of the Sacraments.

e. Spirit of restraint and self-denial.

iii. These may seem commonplace: yet they are essential. None can succeed without them.

III. **The plan** of warfare:

i. Attack the predominant passion: *i.e.* the King of the passions.

ii. This being overcome, the others are more easily subdued.

Their chief being slain, the Philistines fled: 1 Kgs. xvii. 51.

When Achab, the king, was killed, the fight ended: 2 Par. xviii. 34.

iii. The predominant passion is that

a. Which exercises the strongest influence over our inclinations.

b. Whose temptations are most frequent.

c. Which, though light in itself, is strong for us.

d. Which the Devil, therefore, uses most to our disadvantage.

e. Which most holds us back in spiritual progress. The Remora.*

iv. The predominant passion varies with each one.

To be discovered by self-examination, and confessor's advice.

v. We must ever struggle against this, on our way to Heaven.

Like Israelites fighting their way to Cana: Deut. vii.

Conclusion:

i. By this three-fold method, victory will be ours.

ii. The present, an appropriate time for beginning again.

iii. Courage in the battle, God Himself fighting for us. Jos. xxiii. 10.

* The Remora is a small fish which, by means of a sucker-disc is able to attach itself to smooth surfaces. The ancients imagined that it could thus arrest the course of a ship in full sail. Such fable is at any rate an image of the ruling passion, which can most certainly hold us back in the pursuit of virtue

54. THE THREE WITNESSES.

"Three give testimony in Heaven . . . on Earth." 1 Jn. v. 7, 8.

i. The Apostle gives evidence that "Jesus is the Son of God."

ii. His witnesses in Heaven and Earth agree as to Our Lord's nature.

iii. These witnesses above exception, and therefore worthy of credence: viz.:

Three in Heaven:

i. The *Father:*

a. At Our Lord's Baptism: Mth. iii. 17.

b. At the Transfiguration: Mth. xvii. 5.

c. At Our Lord's prayer: Jn. xii. 28.

ii. The *Word:* by

a. His teaching:

"I and the Father are one." Jn. x. 30.

"He that seeth Me seeth the Father also." Jn. xiv. 9.

b. His miracles: *e.g.*

Change of water into wine: Jn. ii. 9.

Feeding the multitudes: Mth. xv. 37: Jn. vi. 11.

Raising the dead to life: Lke. vii. 15: Jn. xi. 44.

His own Resurrection: Mth. xxviii.

c. His prophecies: *e.g.*

The betrayal of Judas: Mrk. xiv. 18.

The denial of Peter: Mth. xxvi. 34.

The destruction of the Temple: Mth. xxiv. 2.

iii. The *Holy Ghost:*

a. At Our Lord's Baptism: Mth. iii. 16.

b. At Pentecost, according to Our Lord's promise: Jn. xvi. 7: Acts ii. 3.

iv. These three are one:

a. In their divine nature and essence—God. Though distinct in the Trinity of Persons.

b. In the effect of their testimony: the Divinity of Christ.

Three on earth:

i. The *Spirit:*

a. The soul, which Our Lord commended to the Father: Lke. xxiii. 46.
Real human intellect, memory and will.

b. The Holy Ghost, sent on earth at Pentecost: Acts ii. 3.
Working through the Sacraments—a divine work.

ii. The *Water:*

a. Which issued from Our Lord's side on the Cross: Jn. xix. 34.

b. Typifying the washing of the soul in Baptism —a divine work.

iii. The *Blood:*

a. Shed throughout the Passion of Our Lord.

b. Issuing from His side in death: Jn. xix. 34.

c. Its merits applied therein to souls.

d. The Holy Eucharist especially—a work of divine love and power.

iv. These three are one:

a. Earthly and created witnesses.

b. Alike in their testimony to Christ being Mediator and Redeemer.

c. Showing also the sanctification of our souls.

d. *Water* and *Blood* testify to the Humanity animated by the *Spirit.*

Conclusion:

i. Christ the Messiah is truly God and Man:

a. As *Man*, He suffered and died.

b. As *God*, His sufferings had infinite merit.

ii. He is our Redeemer promised from the beginning.

iii. Worthy of our adoration, our gratitude and love.

55. CHRIST'S PRINCIPAL VIRTUES.

"Leaving you an example that you should follow His steps."
1 Pet. ii. 21.

i. Christ came on earth for three objects: viz.
   a. To *redeem* us by His death.
   b. To *teach* us His doctrine.
   c. To give us the *example* of virtue.
ii. Consider three of Our Lord's chief virtues: viz.

I. Meekness:

i. Virtue preventing or moderating the impulses of anger.
ii. Founded on Humility, which
   a. Reminds us of our own defects, and
   b. Makes us allow for those of others.
iii. Practised by Our Lord, in
   a. His dealings with little children: Mth. xix. 13.
   b. His bearing with the roughness of the Apostles.
   c. The sufferings and insults of the Passion. Is. liii. 7.
iv. Recommended in Holy Writ: *e.g.*
   Ecclus. iii. 19: Mth. v. 4: xi. 29: Jas. i. 21.
v. Effects:
   a. Peace of mind amid trial.
   b. Influence and power with others.
   c. Foundation of Patience.
vi. Shows itself in gentleness of temper and patient forbearance.

II. Humility:

i. Virtue teaching us to refer all good to God.
ii. Founded on
   a. Knowledge of our own nothingness and sinfulness.
   b. True appreciation of all things.

iii. Practised by Our Lord:
  a. In the Incarnation.
  b. In His obedience to His own creatures: Lke. ii. 51.
  c. During the humiliations of the Passion.
iv. Recommended in the Word of God: *e.g.* Ecclus. xiii. 9: Mth. xi. 29: Lke. xxii. 26: 1 Pet. v. 5.
v. Effects:
  a. Foundation of meekness and all virtue.
  b. Charity and consideration for others.
  c. Resignation to the divine Will.
vi. Seen in readiness to yield and oblige, and acceptance of humiliations.

III. Obedience:

i. Virtue making us submit to others for God's sake.
ii. Grounded on
  a. Humility, recognizing our own inferiority.
  b. Faith, seeing God in our superiors. Lke. x. 16.
iii. Practised by Our Lord:
  a. Coming on earth, because of His Father's Will. Ps. xxxix. 8.
  b. Being subject to Mary and Joseph: Lke. ii. 51.
  c. Submitting to the Law: Mth. v. 17.
iv. Commanded of God: *e.g.* Ex. xx. 12: Eph. vi. 1: Col. iii. 22: Heb. xiii. 17.
v. Effects:
  a. Merit in all we do.
  b. Security against sin.
  c. Peace and temporal happiness.
  d. Concord and welfare of society.
  e. Preparation for the office of Superior.

Lessons:

i. Let each one apply these thoughts to himself, in practical form.
ii. Invoke Our Lord's help to "follow His steps" herein.

56. SHEEP AND MEN.

"You were as sheep." 1 Pet. ii. 25.

i. St. Peter reminds the Faithful, in his Epistle,
   a. That they had strayed, as sheep, from God and the path of salvation.
   b. That they had given themselves to sin and perdition.
   c. How the Shepherd of their souls had rescued them.
ii. See points of resemblance between sheep and men. Learn therefrom lessons of practical use in daily life.

Sheep and Man:

i. Sheep are social and gregarious animals.
   1. They live and graze in company.
   2. They assemble together in danger.
   a. Man is made for society.
      1. Living and dealing with his fellow-beings.
      2. Having one end in view—security and mutual help.
ii. Sheep easily wander away:
   1. They constantly leave the fold when able.
   2. They follow each other in straying.
   b. Man easily strays from the right path.

"I have gone astray like a sheep." Ps. cxviii. 176.
"All we like sheep have gone astray." Is. liii. 6.

      1. How often do men sin and stray from God's love.
         Our own experience must convince us.
      2. Evil example easily leads them away.
iii. Sheep easily become a prey to wolves.
   Only the watchful dog can drive them off.
   c. Man falls an easy prey to the devil and sin.
      1. God's minister is his guide and protector.
         Through Sacrifice, Sacraments, Exhortations, etc.
      2. The priest's duty to rescue and recall the Faithful.

iv. Sheep often bring forth monsters:
More frequently perhaps than other animals.
d. So in the moral order among men.
1. Monsters of cruelty to children and animals: *e.g.*
Many of the Roman Emperors.
2. Some 10,000 murders on earth each year!

Now you are converted:

i. Not through your own power or merit.
ii. But by God's grace, drawing you to Himself.

"No one can come to Me, except the Father draw him." Jn. vi. 44.
"It is God who worketh in you." Phil. ii. 13.

iii. From sin and evil to grace and good life.
iv. During Lent especially, a time of grace and repentance.
v. Though Lent be past, the spirit of penance must ever be with us.

Shepherd and Bishop of Souls:

i. Christ our Lord is the *Shepherd* of our souls (Today's Gospel):
a. Who has done and given so much for their welfare.
Even feeding them with His own Body and Blood.
b. Him we must love and hear.
ii. As if to typify this, He brought to His crib
a. The watchers of sheep—the Jewish shepherds: Lke. ii. 16.
b. The shepherds of nations—the Gentile kings: Mth. ii. 11.
iii. Christ is the *bishop* of our souls.
a. Who has redeemed them with His Blood.
b. Who watches over them and provides for them.
c. To whom we owe obedience, reverence, gratitude.
Acknowledge all this by perseverance in conversion.

57. THE CHRISTIAN PILGRIM.

"As strangers and pilgrims." 1 Pet. ii. 11.

i. Man is made for Heaven, his final home.
ii. On earth he is therefore as a "stranger and pilgrim."
iii. See how pilgrims should act, then act accordingly.

I. A pilgrim must know he is a pilgrim:

i. Sometimes travellers, away from home,
  a. Grow enamoured of the strange land they are in; and
  b. Seem to forget their own country, to which they must return.
ii. So too acts the Christian pilgrim, who
  a. Engrosses himself in the goods and pleasures of time.
    Houses, wealth, servants, horses, etc.
  b. Forgets the object of his creation and position on earth.
  c. Neglects the affairs of his soul and the interests of eternity.
    Even the pagans recognized the folly of all this.
iii. His first duty will be to correct this and recognize his position.

II. A pilgrim has much to bear on the way:

i. Besides pleasure, a journey also entails difficulties.
    Cold and heat, danger and fatigue.
  a. The traveller must set out prepared for these.
  b. On his return, he delights to relate his experiences.
ii. The Christian too has trials to bear.*
  a. *Spiritual* difficulties: temptations, passion, tepidity, etc.
  b. *Temporal* crosses: sickness, misfortune, etc.
  c. These he must meet with fortitude and courage: 2 Cor. iv. 17.
  d. On reaching his true home, he will exclaim with S. Peter of Alcantara:
    "O happy trials, which have brought me so great a reward."
iii. A second duty will be courage amid difficulties.

III. **Often the pilgrim is laughed at:**

i. His language and habits are strange to the natives of other countries.

But he passes on and takes no notice.

ii. So is the Christian pilgrim despised by the world.

"We are made as the refuse of this world." 1 Cor. iv. 13.

a. His practices of piety are ridiculed.

b. His virtues thought odd and against fashion.

c. But he must be independent and heed not the world.

"A small thing to be judged by you." 1 Cor. iv. 3.

For we are

"Fellow citizens with the Saints, and the domestics of God." Eph. ii. 19.

d. Thus have holy men ever acted: *e.g.*

S. Gregory against Henry IV. (see p. 15).

Saints and Martyrs before their persecutors.

iii. The Christian pilgrim must be proof against human respect.

IV. **The pilgrim longs for his country:**

i. On his journey, he enjoys lawful pleasure and distraction.

Yet he often thinks of those at home, and will long to return.

ii. So let the Christian pilgrim oft think of his true home—Heaven.

a. There God, with His Angels and Saints, awaits him.

b. There, friends and relations long for him.

Secure of their own salvation, anxious for his.

iii. Unless he longs for Heaven, he will not take means to reach it: for,

A real desire of salvation is a first step towards obtaining it.

Lessons:

i. Detach your hearts from this land of exile.

ii. Fix your minds on Heaven, for which you are striving.

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* God has the goodness to put some of our purgatory into each day; let us embrace the cross thus presented to us. Gold is put into the crucible to be purified, and soon it will shine on the brows of kings, and on the altars of the living God. The cross effects the same in our regard: it is our crucible.—*De Ravignan.*

58. OBEDIENCE TO CIVIL AUTHORITY.

"Be ye subject . . . to the King . . . to Governors." 1 Pet. iii. 13.

i. Words addressed to the early Christians by S. Peter: for,
   a. Many Jewish converts thought themselves free to disobey pagan rulers; and,
   b. They inclined to rebel against the Roman Emperors.
ii. Words fully applicable to our own day; for,
   a. The spirit of independence and disobedience is abroad.
   b. Rebellion against law and order is so common.
iii. Consider then the duty of submission to civil authority.

Be ye subject:

i. Subjection is the order of nature: *e.g.*
   Children, to parents; pupils, to teachers, etc.
ii. Similarly, obedience to Civil Rulers is a natural duty; for,
   a. Thus only can unity of order be preserved in the world.
   b. Such obedience of citizens becomes the stability of the State.
iii. In laws and regulations not opposed to the Divine Law; for,
   "We ought to obey God rather than men." Acts v. 29.

To the King . . . Governors:

i. The *King: i.e.* the Head of the State.
   a. Whether King, Emperor, President, etc.
   b. The living representative of God on earth.
ii. *Governors: i.e.* all in subordinate capacity, entrusted with authority.
   Magistrates and such as carry on the civil government of the country.
iii. Secular authority is supreme in its own sphere.
   a. In temporal matters, in temporal government.
   b. Its authority, like all other, is from God.

iv. Even to the wicked and impious:
As was Nero, when this Epistle was written.
v. Kings and magistrates are agents of God, to carry on His work:
The maintenance of the life of Society, for the good of all.
vi. The corollary of Authority is Obedience to them that wield it.
vii. Human authority is thus consecrated, as representing the Divine; and,
Obedience is honoured, as shown to God in His representatives.

For God's sake:

i. It is God who established all civil authority; for,
"There is no power but from God." Rom. xiii. 1.
"By Me Kings reign." Prov. viii. 15.
Numa and Lycurgus.*
ii. For the love of God:
a. Whom the Civil Authorities always represent.
b. Motive suggested by S. Paul to all who obey.
Making reasonable and meritorious the service we pay.
c. That others seeing, may glorify God: Mth. v. 16.*
iii. Who will punish disobedience shown to His representatives: Rom. xiii. 2.

Lessons:

i. Ever therefore show due obedience to all lawful authority.
ii. Guard against the spirit of insubordination now so common.
iii. If grievances exist, seek redress by constitutional means only.
iv. Inculcate obedience in children, while young, and for high motives.

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* Numa and Lycurgus feigned to converse with the gods and to receive from them the laws they made for Rome and Sparta, so as to give them weight and authority, as Plato relates.

† Eusebius avers that moved by the example of patient obedience in a christian slave, the Iberians of Spain were brought to the knowledge of God and the true Religion.

59. HEARING AND SPEAKING.

"Swift to hear, but slow to speak." Jas. i. 19.

i. The early part of the Epistle speaks of the gifts of God.

ii. These words suggest means to obtain them.

How so and why?

i. Hearing is a means to learning.

"A wise man shall hear and shall be wiser." Prov. i. 5.

a. Students learn, by hearing the teaching of a master.

S. Thomas of Aquin.*

b. But speaking is rather the work of a teacher.

1. It is more safe and useful to hear than to speak.
2. No man can teach well that has not first learnt well.

c. S. James here enforces this idea; because he found

1. Some of the early Christians preferred to teach rather than to learn.
2. Are there not many nowadays the same?

ii. God, who is all wise, gives an example:

a. For countless ages, He was infinitely happy in Himself alone.

b. Slowly only, viz., at the beginning of time, He spoke His first word.

The *fiat* that brought all things into being.

c. During nearly 6,000 years, God has seldom spoken.

1. Only what Holy Scripture contains.
2. Man speaks more in one year than God in a thousand.

d. They best imitate God who are slow to speak.

iii. Our Lord in the Incarnation similarly:

a. During 30 years, He listened much and spoke but little.

b. Only in His 30th year did He begin to teach.

And how few His words compared with His wisdom!

iv. Example of the Angels, who most approach God in intelligence:
  a. How few their words, as recorded in the Sacred Pages:
    Raphael to Tobias: Tob. v.
    Michael to Daniel: Dan. x.
    Gabriel to the B.V.M.: Lke. i.
  b. Among themselves, they intercommunicate as by acts of the will.
v. Nature itself would seem to suggest the same:
  a. The more intelligent animals use their voice but little:
    The elephant, the horse.
  b. Many birds of beautiful song sing only at stated times.
    The nightingale and blackbird.
  c. The others are ever chirping:
    The swallow, the sparrow.
  d. Man has two ears, only one tongue.
    The former ever open, the latter enclosed.
vi. Talkativeness is a sign of foolishness; silence, of wisdom.
  Prov. xvii. 27: xxix. 20: Ecclus. xxi. 29.
vii. Wise men have ever taught the same: *e.g.* among
  a. Pagans: Zeno, Demosthenes, Solon.
  b. Christians: S. Gregory Naz.: S. Basil: S. Bernard.

Lessons from the text:

i. "Swift to hear."
  a. Be willing to listen and learn.
    In sermons, lectures, reading.
  b. Try to retain and digest what is learnt.
ii. "Slow to speak:"
  a. Be not too ready to talk; but,
  b. Weigh well and consider what you say: for,
    1. The spoken word cannot be recalled.
    2. Thus may you spare yourself many regrets.

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* In his student days, S. Thomas was so silent that he was named the Dumb Ox. But Albertus, his master, soon realized his genius and exclaimed: "You call him a Dumb Ox, but a day will come, when he will bellow so loud by his learning, that he will be heard the world over."—*His Life*, Mch. 7.

60. ANGER.

"Let every man be slow to anger." Jas. i. 19.

i. S. Paul says anger excludes from Heaven." Gal. v. 20.
ii. It must therefore of its nature be a grievous matter.
iii. Hence the advice of S. James to-day: "Be slow to anger."

Anger:

i. A feeling of displeasure at real or supposed injuries, with a desire to punish the offender.
ii. Causes:
  a. Pride, at being thwarted or opposed.
  b. Envy and jealousy of others.
    Cain against Abel: Gen. iv. 5.
iii. Guilt:
  a. Directly opposed to the spirit of Christ and the Gospel.
    "Whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment." Mth. v. 22.
  b. Varying according to the degree of passion, or evil done.
  c. Excluding from Heaven: hence *in se* mortal.
  d. The source of other sins, one of the "capital sins."
    Saul, slaying the priests: 1 Kgs. xxii. 18.
    Absalom, killing Amnon: 2 Kgs. xiii. 28.
    Henry II. and the Martyrdom of S. Thomas: Dec. 29.
iv. Effects (apart the sinfulness):
  a. Ridiculous looks and gestures:
    Julian the Apostate, foaming, when in anger.
    Queen Elizabeth, striking her attendants.
  b. Bodily disease and insanity.
    Valentinian and the ambassadors.*

c. Misery and unhappiness in self and others.
The wasp, in stinging, destroys itself.
A passionate man is unfit for society, dreaded by all.

"Who can bear the violence of one provoked?" Prov. xxvii. 4.

d. Blindness of intellect, unreasoning obstinacy.
Therefore do not act under the influence of passion.

v. Yet, anger may sometimes be lawful—true zeal.

"Be ye angry and sin not." Ps. iv. 5.

Moses, against Israel: Ex. xxxii. 19.
Heli, punished for lack of it: 1 Kgs. iv.
Our Lord's indignation in the Temple: Lke. xix. 45.

Lessons:

i. Consider well the nature and the evils of passion.
ii. Use remedies against it: *e.g.*
a. Daily morning prayer for strength.
b. Forestall occasions of provocation.
"Forewarned is forearmed."
c. Practice of humility.
d. Study examples of meekness.
Our Lord, in life and death: Mth. xi. 29.
Our Lady, *Inter omnes mitis.*
Moses, the meekest of men: Numb. xii. 3.
S. Francis, naturally hasty, become so gentle: Jan. 29.
iii. Show lawful anger, in due season.
Otherwise, great evils may arise, and equal responsibility.

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* The Quadri, defeated by Valentinian, sent ambassadors to sue for mercy. When they presented themselves, the Emperor saw that they were poor men, coarse and ill clad. Thinking this an insult offered to himself, he grew so angry and passionate, that he broke a blood-vessel and died shortly after—death, the result of anger!

61. CALUMNY.

"Not bridling his tongue." Jas. i. 26.

i. Man has three lives:
   a. The *Spiritual* life of the soul: injured by sin.
   b. The *Temporal* life of the body: injured by wounds, etc.
   c. The *Civil* life of good fame: injured by unbridled tongues.

ii. Among sins of the tongue, a most grievous is calumny.

Calumny:

i. Imputing crimes and faults to another untruly.
   a. By word of mouth, by letter or action.
   b. Whether through malice or interest.

ii. Exaggerating his real faults or defects.

iii. Denying his good qualities or actions.

iv. Most odious and malicious sin, against
   a. Truth: saying knowingly what is false.
   b. Charity: showing absence of all Christian feeling.
   c. Justice: endangering another's temporal prospects.
   d. Religion: which is vain, where the tongue is unbridled.
   e. Manly courage: stabbing in the dark, in the victim's absence.

   Yet how common this sin, especially in moments of passion.

v. Guilt of calumny:
   a. Always a sin, because always a lie.

   "Thou shalt not calumniate thy neighbour." Lev. xix. 13.

   b. Will vary, according to
      1. The nature of the imputation made.
      2. The injury effected or intended.
      3. The number of persons hearing it.
   c. A most cruel persecution:
      1. Its bitterness penetrates so deeply.
      2. In other trials usually some alleviation: seldom in this.
      3. Hence, the great reward of those that bear it well. Mth. v. 12.

vi. Reparation must be made, where possible.
Otherwise there is no true sorrow, and the sin cannot be forgiven.

The tongue must be bridled:

i. Our tongue is as that of Christ. *S. Chrysostom.*
On it, is Our Lord received in Holy Communion.*
ii. The tongue is a most dangerous member: Jas. iii.
Of which we are so prone to make evil use.
iii. The unbridled tongue causes a three-fold grievous injury:
a. To *God:* destroying His work in souls.
b. To *neighbours:*
1. Giving scandal and encouragement in evil (as hearers).

"Evil communications corrupt good manners." 1 Cor. xv. 33.

2. Endangering also their temporal interests (as victims).
c. To the *Speaker* himself, through his sin.

"The tongue of the fool is his ruin." Ecclus. v. 15.

iv. The tongue, a chief instrument for mischief employed by the devil.

Lessons:

i. Take to heart S. James' reminder this day; for
Too many disgrace their Religion by neglect of it.
ii. Endeavour to bridle the tongue, against calumny, by
a. Prayer for aid, together with humility and watchfulness.
b. Thought of the presence of God. Lke. xxiv. 17.
c. Thought of the account we must give of our words. Mth. xii. 36.
iii. Unless this be done, religion will little avail us.

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* A magnificent horse was once lent to one of the Popes. Having once borne the Supreme Pontiff, it would never allow any one else to mount it. The tongue of the Christian, which so often bears Our Lord in Holy Communion, ought never to serve any other master.—*Faber.*

62. DETRACTION.

"Not bridling his tongue." Jas. i. 26.

i. Many evils follow the unbridled use of the tongue
Hence this warning of the Apostle.
ii. Among common sins of the tongue is Detraction.
iii. Consider this, lest our religion prove vain.

Detraction:

i. Consists in
a. Making known without cause the secret faults of another.
By word of mouth, insinuation, writing, etc.
b. Imparting uncharitable news, even as a secret.
c. Hinting there are things others know not of a neighbour: or,
d. Seeking to lessen the merit of his good works.
ii. Often a grievous sin;

"The detractor is the abomination of men." Prov. xxiv. 9.
"Detractors, hateful to God." Rom. i. 30.

a. Against *Charity:*
1. Doing an act of hatred or dislike.
2. Exposing a neighbour to ridicule or contempt.
3. Causing him pain, should it reach his ears.
b. Against *Justice:*
1. Robbing another of the esteem he enjoys.
2. Exposing him thus to temporal losses.
c. Against the *Example* of Christ,
Who would not name the one that was to betray Him.
d. Committing, as it were, a three-fold murder:
1. In the soul of the Detractor himself.
2. In the soul of the Listener.
3. In the civil life of the Victim.

iii. The guilt of the Detraction depends on
  a. The character and position of him
    1. Who speaks the evil: and
    2. Of whom the evil is spoken.
  b. The nature of the fault revealed.
  c. The number of those who hear it.
  d. The injury thus caused.
iv. Forbidden also in regard to the dead.
  a. They still have a right to their good name.
  b. Surviving friends are also affected by the detraction.
    Wolves and the dead.*
v. Reparation necessary where possible.
  According to the nature of the sin, and the circumstances of the case.

Lessons:

i. We have faults enough of our own, without troubling about those of others.
ii. Avoid detraction as mean and dastardly.
  The frogs and the dark.†
iii. Remember the evils of this sin, often irreparable: *e.g.* Hatred, misunderstandings, temporal and eternal loss.
iv. Be not deceived: a detracting tongue and true religion are incompatible.
v. Endeavour to be kindly, in thoughts and words about others.

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* Wolves sometimes tear up the soil of graves, to prey on the bodies of the dead. Detractors are sometimes so keen of evil, that they spare not even friends and others deceased.

† Frogs are usually silent during the daytime, but in the darkness of the night they croak and make noise enough. Detractors dare not speak evil openly before their victim, but only in the dark, as it were, and behind his back.

63. THOUGHTS ON THE ASCENSION.

"A cloud received Him out of their sight." Acts i. 9.

i. Each mystery of Our Lord's history presents thoughts and lessons.
ii. Consider some in reference to His Ascension.

He was taken to Heaven:

i. Not by the hands of Angels.
ii. But by His own divine power, as God-Man.
    By the "agility" imparted to His glorified Humanity.
iii. Opening to man the gates of Heaven, closed by Adam's sin.
iv. Why at the early age of 34?
    a. Christ came to offer His life to redeem us.
        1. Befitting that this should be in the fulness of age; for,
        2. Adam was created, and sinned, in perfect manhood.
        3. Christ repaired this evil at that same age.
    b. He had completed the work He came to do: viz.:
        1. The preaching of His doctrine.
        2. The practising of all virtues.
        3. The working of many miracles.
        4. The founding of His Church on earth.
    c. Heaven thus now due to His sacred Humanity. As it is also promised to His followers.
    d. To teach us not to desire long life, but Heaven rather.

Forty days after the Resurrection:

i. The number 40 is sacred and of frequent use in Scripture:
    The deluge lasted 40 days: Gen. vii. 4.
    Moses was 40 days on the mount: Ex. xxiv. 18.
    Our Lord fasted 40 days: Mth. iv. 2.

ii. Fulfilling types of old:
a. God showed Himself 40 days to Moses, in giving the Old Law.
Christ spent 40 days with the Apostles, completing the New Law.
b. The Jews wandered 40 years in the desert, journeying towards Cana.
1. Christ remained 40 days before returning to Heaven.
2. This also denotes our whole life of exile on earth.
iii. A recompense to His Apostles, for His 40 hours' separation from them, in death.
iv. Gradually weaning them from His visible presence.
v. Showing His liberality in bestowing consolation:
a. For 40 hours' withdrawal, He gives 40 days of His presence.
b. Thus does He also deal with souls: joy after pain.

Speaking of the Kingdom of God:

i. The Kingdom of Heaven and its glory.
The eternal reward for which all must strive.
ii. The Kingdom of the Church on earth:
a. Where God reigns in souls by His grace.
b. Which is the way to the Church in Heaven.
iii. Giving the Apostles instructions, as to
a. The constitution of the Church.
b. The preaching of the Gospel to men.
c. The Sacraments and Sacrifice.
d. The Christian virtues, leading to Heaven.
e. The spiritual trials and persecutions to come: Mth. xi. 12.
iv. Teaching us to think and speak of Heaven:
a. Heaven, our support in trial.
S. Felicitas and her children: Jly. 10.
b. Heaven, the reward of our fidelity.
Faith in which will make us strong in God: Heb. xi.

Let us to-day fix our eyes and hearts on Our Lord ascending to Heaven, (whence He came to redeem us) which we must all strive to gain.

64. PURPOSES OF THE ASCENSION.

"Beholding Him going up to Heaven." Acts i. 10.

Objects of Our Lord's Ascension:

i. To receive the reward of His merits:
   a. Heaven only is the place befitting a glorified body.
   b. During life Christ suffered ignominy and pain.
   c. The reward of this is bestowed to-day.

ii. To triumph over enemies, spiritual and temporal. As a prince returns home after his victory.

iii. To reopen the gates of Heaven to man.
   a. Adam's sin had closed these gates for ever.
   b. All men together unable to reopen them.
   c. On this day He ascended, accompanied by the souls in Limbo.

iv. To rejoice and adorn the kingdom of Heaven: Apoc. xxi. 23.
   a. The angels acclaim Him in gladness and joy: Apoc. v. 12.
   b. He is seated in glory, on the right hand of the Father.
   c. The Sacred Humanity, one of the joys and beauties of Heaven.

v. To show that His kingdom was not of the earth: Jn. xviii. 36.
   a. The Apostles thought He would establish a kingdom here.
   b. Their minds and hearts at first fixed on things of earth. But,
   c. Vanity, self-love, etc. cannot ascend to Heaven.

vi. To confirm the divinity of His doctrine:
   a. He taught that He came from Heaven to deliver it.
   b. He visibly returned thither in proof of this.

vii. To send down the Holy Ghost: Jn. xvi. 7.
  a. To be the light of the Church.
  b. To be the strength of the Apostles and the Faithful.
    We should therefore prepare for the coming Pentecost.
  c. To complete Our Lord's work in the Church.

viii. To prepare a place for us: Jn. xiv. 2.
  a. According to the merits and sanctity of each one.
  b. Here at least is ambition truly lawful—to strive for a high place.
    S. Martin in death.*

ix. To be our Mediator:
  "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just. 1 Jn. ii. 1.
  "He is the propitiation of our sins." 1 Jn. ii. 2.
  "Christ . . . maketh intercession for us." Rom. viii. 34.

x. To be able to remain with us in the Most Holy Eucharist.
  Visible presence with sacramental presence would seem incongruous.

Lessons:

i. See here reasons to rejoice on this Festival.
ii. Our Lord's Ascension, a pledge of our own.
iii. These thoughts should help
  a. To strengthen us in temptation and trial.†
  b. To revive our courage in despondency.
  c. To make us despise things of earth.
  d. To make us long for God's glorious kingdom.

* Full of confidence in the consoling thought, that Our Lord by His Ascension had gone to prepare a place for us, S. Martin, on his death-bed, kept his eyes fixed on Heaven, as in an ecstasy. His disciples suggested he should turn on his side for relief, but he replied: "Leave me to contemplate Heaven rather than the earth, and to meditate on the path my Saviour took to Heaven, which path I hope my soul will shortly follow to go and be united to my God."—*His Life:* Nov. 11.

† Struggle, labour and suffering are the three elements of life here below: they are painful and often discouraging. But happy we, if we have a larger share of them, for they will bring us in closer union with Christ, in the glory which results from them.

65. PRUDENCE AND PRAYER.

"Be prudent, and watch in prayers." 1 Pet. iv. 7.

i. This three-fold advice always seasonable.
ii. Yet especially so, between Easter and Pentecost:
  a. That we may guard the peace gained through our Easter confession.
  b. That we may prepare for the coming of the Holy Ghost.
iii. We can easily lose this peace: the Holy Spirit will not enter a soul in sin: Wisd. i. 4.
iv. Consider then the three duties of

I. Prudence:

i. Virtue dictating what is best to be done, to act according to God's will.
  The guide of all the other virtues. *S. Bernd.*
ii. Office of prudence:
  a. To discover good and the means to it.
  b. To judge all the circumstances of a case.
  c. To direct the will to do right.
iii. Means to obtain it:
  a. Fervent prayer:
    "Show, O Lord, Thy ways to me, and teach me Thy paths." Ps. xxiv. 4.
  b. Willingness to take advice:
    "Seek counsel always of a wise man. Job. iv. 19.
    "My son, do thou nothing without counsel." Ecclus. xxxii. 24.
  c. Subdue the passions, which blind the intellect.
iv. Examples:
  King Solomon: 3 Kgs. iii. 12.
  The five wise Virgins: Mth. xxv.

II. Watchfulness:

"Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation." Mth. xxvi. 41.

i. Avoid occasions of sin:
  Person place or thing.

ii. Guard the senses, avenues of sin to the soul, especially the eyes.
iii. Foresee occasions of danger, and prepare for them.
iv. Unless we watch, prayer will be like tempting God.
v. S. Peter was taught by the experience of his triple fall: Mth. xxvi.
Hence his advice herein.

III. **Prayer:**
i. Under prayer would come:
a. Fervent petition to
1. God, for grace and strength.
2. Bl. Virgin, for protection and aid.
3. Angel Guardians, and Patron Saints.
b. Ejaculations in time of need.
c. Reception of the Sacraments, as fountains of strength.
The practice of the Saints and holy souls.
d. Meditation, or instruction on the eternal truths.
ii. Especially this week, for the gifts of the Holy Ghost.
a. Like the Apostles, making the first novena in the Church.
b. The greater our fervour, the greater the abundance of these graces.

Lessons:
i. Some at Pentecost will displease the Holy Spirit by their sin.
a. Wanting in prudence: walking on the very brink of hell.
b. Devoid of watchfulness: throwing themselves into every occasion.
c. Careless of prayer: feeling not the need of divine help.
ii. *We* at least must imitate the Apostles this week:
a. In *prudence:* withdrawing occasionally from the world.
b. In *watchfulness:* controlling and mortifying the senses.
c. In *prayer:* preparing ourselves for the Holy Ghost.
Then will He come with the abundance of His Gifts.

66. CHARITY TO OTHERS.

"Have a mutual charity among yourselves." 1 Pet. iv. 8.

i. Our Lord has shown the greatest love in our regard. Incarnation: Passion and Death: Bl. Sacrament.
ii. Such love S. Peter desires us to show to each other.

Motives of Charity:

i. Our neighbour is the object of God's eternal love: Jer. xxxi. 3.
   a. His immortal soul is redeemed like ours, and dear to God.
   b. God's love for it compared to that of a mother for her child: Is. xlix. 15.
   c. We all have the same Father, and are destined for the same Home.
   d. How fail to love what God loves so well: 1 Jn. iv. 11.
   e. Mere philanthropy is not the Christian virtue of Charity:
      1. Seeking chiefly the good of the body.
      2. Based, too often, on mere human motives.
ii. The command of God:

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Mth. xxii. 39.

   a. The love of our neighbour is like to the love of God.
   b. It is declared to be the fulfilment of the law: Rom. xiii. 10.
   c. Without it, love of God is not genuine.
iii. Christ calls this precept His own special command: Jn. xv. 12.
iv. Our lot for eternity is made to depend on it: Mth. xxv.: *e.g.*
   a. Our union with God in Heaven:
      1. What we do to others, we do unto God.

"I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat," etc.

      2. This the reason of our great reward.

b. Our separation from God in Hell:
1. What we fail to do to others, we fail doing to Him.
"I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat," etc.
2. This the reason of the soul's damnation.
c. No duty could be more strongly enforced.

Charity requires

i. *Intelligence:*
a. Recognizing the reasons for loving one another, (above).
b. Avoiding love based on mere sentiment, or fancy
c. Reasoning on the excellence and beauty of every soul.
ii. *Devotedness:*
a. Readiness for self-sacrifice:
In time, wealth, goods, personal service.
b. Every day brings opportunities for this.
iii. *Restraint* of the tongue:
a. Criticism and discussions ruin Charity
b. Tale-bearing, ignoble tittle-tattle, etc. cause endless mischief.
c. A tongue without restraint is the tongue of a viper: *S. Bernd.*

Manner of showing Charity:

i. We must love all without exception.
As God makes His sun to rise upon all: Mth. v. 45.
a. Relatives, friends, benefactors.
b. Fellow-countrymen and co-religionists: Gal. vi. 10.
c. Even our enemies, like Our Lord on the Cross: Lke. xxiii. 34.
ii. In practical form: 1 Jn. iii. 18: *e.g.*
Through the works of mercy, spiritual and corporal.
iii. In a kindly and cheerful spirit: Ecclus. xxxv. 11.
iv. The good, unselfish spirit is everything.

Lessons:

i. Examine your conduct as to brotherly love.
ii. Repair the past, by good resolutions for the future.
iii. Charity brings its own reward both here and hereafter.
"Charity covereth a multitude of sins." (Ep. to-day.)

67. TONGUES OF FIRE.

"Parted tongues, as it were, of fire." Acts ii. 3.

i. Three appearances of the Holy Ghost in the world:
   a. As a *dove*, at Our Lord's Baptism: Mth. iii. 16.
   b. As a *cloud*, at His Transfiguration: Mth. xvii. 5.
   c. As *tongues* of fire, on Pentecost: Acts ii. 3.
ii. Consider to-day the meaning of this last.

Parted tongues;

i. Numerous, one over each of those assembled together.
ii. Denoting the multitude of the gifts to be bestowed.
   "There are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit." 1 Cor. xii. 4.
iii. The tongue enables us to distinguish between bitter and sweet.
   The Holy Ghost, between things earthly and spiritual.
iv. We need the Holy Spirit, to rule and sanctify the tongue.
v. Denoting the *gift of tongues* in the Apostles:
   a. Necessary, to enable them to preach the new Gospel to all men.
      Men of every nation understood them: Acts ii. 8.
   b. Some Saints have also had this gift.*
vi. Implying the ministry of the Word, and the duty of preaching.
   Success of the preaching of the Apostles: Acts ii. 41: iv. 4.

As it were:

i. Implying the likeness to fire, not the reality.
ii. No real dove at Our Lord's Baptism; only the appearance.

Fire:

i. The Old Law given amid thunder and lightning: Ex. xix.
   The New Law, under this form of fire.
ii. The Law of Christ was to be a law of fire, (Charity and zeal).

iii. As the Holy Spirit had strengthened the Prophets by fire, so now the Apostles: *e.g.*
Isaias vi. 7.
Jeremias: Lam. i. 13.
iv. Denoting the effects of the Holy Ghost: *e.g.*
a. Fire *purifies: e.g.* metals from their dross.
The Holy Ghost cleanses the soul from imperfections.
b. Fire *consumes* what comes in its way.
The Holy Ghost consumes our hearts with love.
c. Fire gives *light:* the Holy Ghost
1. Is the light of God, to show us the path to Heaven.
2. Is to be invoked in doubt, and difficulty of any kind.
d. Fire gives *heat:*
The Holy Ghost animates the soul with practical charity.

Lessons:

i. We too all need the Holy Ghost:
Be convinced of this, and seek His gifts.
ii. *Confirmation* especially bestows them; and supplies the need.
iii. *Pentecost*
a. Renews His graces.
Not in miraculous form, yet most truly in the soul.
b. Hence the benefit of its annual observance.
iv. *Devotion* to this Holy Spirit
a. Preserves His gifts within us: hence,
b. Aspirations of love, hymns, etc. in His honour.

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* S. Vincent Ferrer (Apl. 5) always preached in Spanish or Latin, yet was understood by French and Greeks, Germans and English, who flocked to hear him—S. Dominic (Aug. 4) was desirous of teaching the true religion to some Germans whom he met, but was unable to do so, not knowing their language: he prayed to God for a knowledge of it; his prayer was heard, and for some days together he instructed those Germans—S. Anthony of Padua (June 13) had the gift of languages, and by the light of the Holy Ghost was able to read the state of men's souls—So in like manner, S. Francis Xavier (Dec. 3), among the various peoples of India.

68. THE HOLY GHOST.

"They were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Acts ii. 4.

i. The event of to-day is
   a. The beginning of a new life in the Apostles.
   b. The completion of the foundation of the Church.
ii. Consider three truths, concerning the Author of such work.

First Truth: The Holy Ghost is the third person of the Bl. Trinity.

i. A person is a complete substance:
   a. Endowed with reason.
   b. Existing in itself.
   c. Responsible for its own actions.
ii. The Holy Ghost is truly a person: because,
   a. Fulfilling the conditions of the definition.
   b. Called so equivalently in Holy Scripture.
      "He shall give you another *Paraclete*." Jn. xiv. 16.
      "I will send *Him* to you. Jn. xvi. 7.
   c. Scripture attributes to Him the acts of a person.
      "The Holy Ghost will *teach* you all things." Jn. xiv. 26.
      "The Spirit Himself *asketh* for us." Rom. viii. 26.
iii. Third in the order of the Divine Persons: Mth. xxviii. 19.

Second Truth: The Holy Ghost proceeds from Father and Son.

i. As from one principle. *Cl. of Florence.*
   a. Called the Spirit of the Father: Mth. x. 20: Spirit of the Son: Gal. iv. 6.
   b. Said to be sent by the Father: Jn. xiv. 26: by the Son: Jn. xv. 26.
ii. Two modes of procession in the Divine Persons: by way of
   a. *Knowledge*, (generation), as with the Son.
   b. *Love*, (spiration), as with the Holy Ghost.

iii. The Holy Ghost not later than Father or Son:
a. The mutual love of these is eternal.
b. Hence the Holy Ghost is eternal like them.

Third Truth: The Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and the Son.

i. The Holy Ghost is called God.

"The Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." 1 Jn. v. 7.
"The Spirit of God dwelleth in you." 1 Cor. iii. 16.
Ananias lying to the Holy Ghost lied to God: Acts v. 3, 4.

ii. Scripture gives Him divine attributes: *e.g.*

a. Omniscience:

"The Spirit searcheth all things: yea, the deep things of God." 1 Cor. ii. 10.

b. Omnipresence:

"The Spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world." Wisd. i. 7.

c. Omnipotence:

"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." Lke. i. 35.

d. Miracles:

"I by the Spirit of God cast out devils." Mth. xii. 28.

iii. Thus the Holy Ghost is the same Lord and God as the Father and the Son, and is equal to them in all things for ever.

Lessons:

i. Pentecost will repeat the event it commemorates: In different form, yet as truly as with the Apostles.
ii. The Holy Ghost will come to us also, if we avoid
a. *Mortal* sin, which excludes Him from the soul.
b. *Venial* sin, which grieves Him.
iii. Cultivate special devotion to the Holy Spirit, as
a. The *Light* of God, to guide us.
b. The *Grace* of God, to strengthen us.
vi. Invoke Him in times of trial, doubt and difficulty.

69. GOD'S KNOWLEDGE.

"O the depth of the riches of the knowledge of God." Rom. xi. 33.

i. God's knowledge far surpasses that of all angels and men: it is
   a. From eternity and incapable of increase.
   b. At the same moment: *we* proceed from knowledge to knowledge.
   c. From Himself: not through creatures.
ii. Consider to-day this infinite knowledge of the triune God.

God knows and sees all things: 1 Jn. iii. 20.

i. All things known and knowable: *e.g.*
   a. Actual, i.e. now existing: *e.g.*
      Every grain of sand, every flower, insect and being.
   b. Possible, i.e. that might exist but do not:
      "God calleth those things that are not, as those that are." Rom. iv. 17.
   c. Past:
      1. The good and bad acts of men from the beginning of time.
      2. The details of all men's lives.
   d. Present:
      "All things are naked and open to His eyes." Hebr. iv. 13.
      1. All the actions of men now doing in all parts.
      2. All events now occurring throughout the universe.
   e. Future:
      1. Events good and bad yet to occur.
         Jesus knew who was to betray Him. Jn. vi. 65.
      2. Things yet to come into existence.
         The predictions of Christ and the Prophets.
      3. The future free acts of men.

f. Conditional Future, i.e. what would be, under certain conditions:

David's danger, if he went to Ceila: 1 Kgs. xxiii. 12.

The repentance of Tyre, *if* it had had the graces of Corozain: Mth. xi. 21.

ii. Even our most secret thoughts.

"I know their thoughts." Deut. xxxi. 21.

"The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men." Ps. xciii. 11.

Hidden from all, in the depths of the heart.

Jesus read the thoughts of the Scribes: Mth. ix. 4.

He knew the heart of Nathaniel. Jn. i. 47.

iii. This knowledge does not destroy man's free-will:

a. Man does not act, because God knows and sees the act.

b. But God knows and sees the act, because man will do it.*

iv. Mystery explained by the Eternity and Immensity of God.

v. The source of God's unerring justice.

Fatalism holds that

i. Everything that is must be.

ii. Nothing can be otherwise than it is.

iii. Man therefore is not free to act.

iv. God cannot therefore justly punish or reward.

v. Man need take no precautions in sickness, etc.

vi. There is no Providence.

All which teaching favours passion and justifies crime!

Lessons:

i. As God sees all, so must we, as His images, see

a. The *Past*, to humble ourselves and return thanks.

b. The *Present*, to profit by it.

c. The *Future*, to prepare for it.

ii. God sees me! these words well meditated prevent more crime than all preachers together.

iii. The thought that God sees us should also comfort us in trial.

* If, standing by the banks of a river, you see a log of wood up the water floating towards you, you know that in time it will reach the place where you are standing and pass before you. The log however does not come down to you because you see it, but you know it will pass you, because it is coming.

70. EFFECTS OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

"His charity is perfected in us." 1 Jn. iv. 12.

i. True love is ever fertile in results.
ii. The stronger the flame of God's love within us, the more perfect its effects.

Effects of the love of God:

i. It purifies the soul from earthly desires:
   a. The heart is made to love, and must find an object to love.
   b. The more we fix it on God, the more we detach it from things of earth.
ii. It leads the soul to do all for God: 1 Cor. x. 31.
   a. Whoso loveth God, eats, not for pleasure's sake but, to please Him.
   b. Sleep, study, labour, etc. are all in like manner for God.
   c. Love is thus a link of union between lover and beloved: *e.g.*
      Jacob and Benjamin: Gen. xliv. 20.
      Jonathan and David: 1 Kgs. xviii. 1.
      The early Christians, through love, had all things in common: Acts iv. 32.
iii. It makes the soul desire and do great things for God: *e.g.*
   The Apostles rejoiced to suffer for Christ: Acts v. 41.
   S. Paul thought his trials but light: 2 Cor. iv. 17.
   Undertakings of missionaries, in spite of all dangers.
      Things not easy in themselves, but easy to them that love.
iv. The same love tends to increase daily in the soul.
   a. The salamander was supposed to live on fire. Symbol of the lover's heart.
   b. God's love is as a flame ever burning within.
   c. Some Saints seem to have been all consumed with love: *e.g.*
      S. Francis of Assisi: Oct. 4.
         1. Who saw God in all things.

2. Who burned with love to the Blessed Sacrament.
3. Who was rewarded with the Stigmata.

S. Philip Neri: May 26.

v. It makes the soul try to spread love in others: *e.g.*
S. Paul, writing to the Corinthians: 2 Cor. v. 20.
The Saints wept to see God so little loved.
The efforts of holy men to bring souls to God.

"He that hath no zeal hath no love." *S. Bernd.*

vi. It gives the soul power with God:
Jacob wrestling with the angel: Gen. xxxii. 28.
S. Francis of Assisi commanded the brute creation.
The Saints, through love, worked miracles of power.
They read the hearts of men, and knew the future.

vii. It brings peace and joy to the soul:
Job, amid all his trials: Job i. ii.
David ever sang the praises of God: Ps. xxxiii. 2.
S. Lawrence's joy on the gridiron: Aug. 10.
"Enough, O Lord, enough," exclaimed S. Francis Xavier: Dec. 3.

viii. It makes the soul to languish and die in God.
Our Lady died, not of disease, but of pure love of God.
The ecstasies of the Saints.

Lessons:

i. Appreciate the beauty of this love of God, true beauty of the soul.*

ii. Take means to obtain it: *e.g.*
a. Strive for a more perfect knowledge of God.
It is just their knowledge which makes the "charity" of the Blessed so full.
b. Consideration of one's own nothingness.
c. Purity of heart and detachment from creatures.
d. Longing desires to possess it: Wisd. vi. 21.

iii. One of our most important occupations should be the exercise of explicit acts of love.

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* Unless a coal be inflamed and burning, it has no beauty, so neither has the soul, except it burn with love for God.—*S. Bernardine.*

71. COMMUNION UNDER ONE KIND.

"Whosoever shall eat . . . or drink." 1 Cor. xi. 27.

i. In the Holy Eucharist, the Body of Our Lord is not separated from His Blood. But,
ii. The Whole living Christ is contained under each species. Hence,
iii. Whoever receives under one kind only receives the whole Sacrament.

Communion under one kind:

i. Christ is received in every consecrated particle the world over.
One man speaking may be heard by a thousand.
A broken mirror reflects an object in each of its pieces.
The soul is whole and entire in all our members.
ii. Hence the priest may divide particles when necessary.
iii. The same promises are made to those who eat only, as to those who eat and drink:
"If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." Jn. vi. 52.
"He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath life everlasting." Jn. vi. 55.
iv. S. Paul declares him that eats *or* drinks unworthily guilty of the Body *and* the Blood. 1 Cor. xi. 27.
v. From the very times of the Apostles, Communion was often given under the form of bread only: *e.g.*
a. To the faithful, to take to their homes during persecution.
S. Tharcisius.*
b. To prisoners, infants and the sick.
Serapion; and Queen Mary.†
c. To anchorets, to communicate themselves in the desert.
vi. Common in England in the 7th c.: general in the West in the 12th c.
a. Because of accidents and abuses.
b. Because of the difficulty of giving the Cup to crowds.

c. Many cannot bear the taste of wine.
d. For the sake of greater reverence.

vii. Definitely laid down in the Council of Constance: A.D. 1414.
a. Against the Hussites, maintaining the necessity of the Cup.
b. A matter of discipline only, which may vary as needed.

viii. The belief of the Faithful guards them against thinking this a loss.

ix. Practice agreeable to Holy Scripture:
a. As seen from the words of Our Lord. (iii. above).
b. The Eucharist often described as the breaking of *bread*. Lke. xxiv. 30, 35: Acts ii. 46.
c. Probably the opposite is often held through pride only, rebelling against regulations made by authority.

x. Thus is the Church justified in continuing her present practice.

Conclusions:

i. The custom of the Church, in preserving the Holy Eucharist under the form of bread, shows her belief in the permanence of the Real Presence.
ii. Her whole practice ever in consonance with Scripture.
iii. How unfounded then the objections against Communion under one kind.
iv. Respect and obedience due to the Church's wisdom in such matters.

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* S. Tharcisius was arrested by the Pagans, as he was carrying the Bl. Sacrament to his home, and stoned to death, because he would not betray It to them.—*Life:* Aug. 15.

† A certain old man named Serapion, when at the point of death, despatched a youth for the priest, who, happening also to be confined to bed by sickness, sent to the dying Serapion a particle of the Bl. Eucharist. He directed the messenger to moisten It with water, and then put It into the mouth of the old man, who expired shortly after receiving It.—*Eusebius.* When Mary, Queen of Scots, was imprisoned by Elizabeth, and no priest allowed near her, Pope S. Pius V. permitted her to administer Communion to herself, with Sacred Hosts brought to her by a faithful attendant.

72. BAD COMMUNION.

"Eateth and drinketh judgment to himself." 1 Cor. xi. 29.

i. From the time of the Apostles, bad Communions have been made.

It was even an Apostle that made the first one.

ii. The Church to-day recalls words for our warning and meditation.

Bad Communion:

i. Communion made with the consciousness of mortal sin in the soul.

Bringing Our Lord and the devil to dwell together!

ii. A sacrilege of the deepest dye:

a. To turn a church into a stable would be a crime.

b. To profane sacred vessels, like Baltazzar, the same.

c. What then to receive Communion into the filth of sin!

Like tying the martyrs to putrid corpses!

iii. Usually caused by a previous bad confession.

Hence the Apostle bids us prove ourselves: 1 Cor. xi. 28.

iv. As a sacrilege,

a. It tends to harden the heart.

The robber's advice.*

b. Often punished even in this life:

Remorse and despair, as in Judas: Mth. xxvii. 5.

Sickness and premature death: 1 Cor. xi. 30.

The Donatists and their dogs.†

v. Does not discern the body of the Lord: *i.e.*

a. Does not distinguish between this heavenly food, and our daily food.

b. Treats both as on an equal footing.

c. And so eateth and drinketh judgment, *i.e.* punishment.

vi. Better no Communion, therefore, than a bad one!

Means to avoid bad Communion:

i. Lively *faith*, through meditation:
   a. Realizing well what it is we receive.
      This divine mystery offers a wide field for thought and study.
   b. Leading us to approach with all reverence.

ii. A good *confession:*
   a. As the means of blotting out mortal sin.
   b. As a means of exterminating, or weakening, evil inclinations.
   c. The channel of abundant grace to the soul.
      The more the soul is thus adorned, the greater the fruits received.

iii. Careful *preparation:* a first result of lively faith.
   a. Remote: in the practice of a good life.
   b. Proximate: in prayer, acts of desire, actual devotion.

iv. Worthy *thanksgiving*. a further effect of lively faith.
   a. At least a quarter of an hour in prayer.
   b. The soul then has three precious advantages.
      1. Her acts are more fervent and efficient.
      2. She obtains more ready answers to her petitions.
      3. She is transformed into the likeness of Jesus more efficaciously.
   c. A great help towards a good Communion next time.

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* To a young robber, whose sense of right had not yet been stifled, the chieftain of the band said: "Go and make bad Communions, and you will no longer fear!" Unfortunately the young robber followed this advice, and indeed soon found how sacrilege hardens the heart, for he became the most desperate of the lot.—*Cat. en Ex.*

† The Donatists, 4th c. used to invade the Catholic churches and throw the consecrated particles to their dogs. But one day the Justice of God overtook them, for the dogs, suddenly becoming furiously mad, rushed upon their owners and almost devoured them, thus avenging the sacrilege committed against the Bl. Sacrament.—*S. Optatus.*

73. THE WORLD'S HATRED.

"Wonder not, if the world hate you." 1 Jn. iii. 13.

i. Contraries hate one another:
Black is opposed to white; activity, to sloth.
ii. Thus the followers of the world ever hate the children of God.
As in the very beginning, Cain hated Abel: Gen. iv.

Grounds of this opposition:

i. The difference between worldlings and the Saints.
a. Worldlings love honours, riches and pleasure.
The Saints practise humility, poverty and self-denial.
b. Likeness and resemblance are the roots of mutual love; while
Dissimilarity begets hate and dislike.
c. Testimony of Holy Writ:

"He is grievous unto us . . . for his life is not like other men's." Wisd. ii. 15.
"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Tim. iii. 12.

d. In the animal kingdom similar feuds are found: *e.g.*
Between wolf and lamb; hound and hare.
e. Wonder not, then, if hatred exist between the followers of the world and those of Christ, their aims being so different.
ii. Envy and jealousy:
a. Men swayed by passion cannot rise to the virtue of the Saints.
b. They see the Saints in the path to Heaven, while they themselves are on the road to Hell.
c. This creates envy, and then begets opposition.
As the devil and the damned envy and hate the Blessed in Heaven.
d. Hence sinners hate those who practise religion.
iii. The world sees the Saints separate themselves from its ways.

"He abstaineth from our ways, as from filthiness." Wisd. ii. 16.

a. It thus regards them as traitors and deserters.
b. Our Lord Himself assigns this as a cause of persecution.

> "Because you are not of the world . . . the world hateth you." Jn. xv. 19.

iv. The Saints are a reproach to the ways of the world.
a. Vain reasonings of the wicked from the beginning:

> "He upbraideth us with transgressions of the law, and divulgeth against us the sins of our way of life." Wisd. ii. 12.

b. A good life is a silent condemnation of a bad one.
1. The Saints cling to God and His Law, in spite of all.
2. They suffer prison, slander, etc. for justice' sake.
c. Men resent such rebuke, however indirect.
d. Hence their persecution of those who give it.

Lessons:

i. If we are trying to serve God, we may look for hatred and opposition.
ii. Our Lord suffered such before us: Jn. xv. 18.
As His disciples, we must expect the same: Mth. x. 24.
iii. This hatred of the world will help
a. To detach our hearts from it.
b. To obtain us God's special love and protection.*
c. To secure us a magnificent reward hereafter: Mth. v. 20.
iv. This way of the Cross is the safest road to Heaven.†

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* In the lives of the Saints, are found many instances of the miraculous manner in which God has extended His protection to those who serve Him, in spite of the hatred and opposition of men: the natural laws suspended in their favour; wild beasts subdued at their feet; the whole of nature obedient to their word. *E.g.*: S. Martina, Jan. 30; S. Venantius, May 18; S. Francis, Oct. 4; S. Daria, Oct. 25.

† Walk where thou wilt, seek what thou wilt, and thou wilt find no higher way above, no safer way below, than the way of the holy Cross.—*Imit.* 2. xii.

74. HATRED.

"Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." 1 Jn. iii. 15.

i. A chief object of S. John's Epistle is to inculcate the need of good works.

ii. Love of our neighbour is a necessary and meritorious good work.

iii. Hence his frequent reference to Charity and to the avoidance of all that may wound it.

iv. To-day he speaks of hatred, directly opposed to love.

Hatred:

i. Deep, permanent resentment for injury received; enmity.

ii. Most sinful, as a breach of the two-fold law of Charity.

"Love your enemies." Mth. v. 44.
"He that hateth his brother is in darkness." 1 Jn. ii. 11.
"If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar." 1 Jn. iv. 20.

iii. Dislike is not hatred, but, if not controlled, may lead to it.

iv. Signs of:

a. Taking opportunity to inflict injury in any way. The Egyptians against Israel: Ex. i. 13.

b. Grieving at an enemy's success.

c. Rejoicing in his misfortune.

d. Refusing him the ordinary marks of civility.

v. Guilt of:

a. Varies with the intensity and deliberation.

b. Oftentimes a mortal sin.

vi. Causes of:

a. Ill-feeling not suppressed, but encouraged.

b. Dislikes not resisted.

c. Jealousy and envy.

Joseph hated by his brethren: Gen. xxxvii. 4.

vii. Effects of:

a. It hardens the heart, and closes it to grace.

S. Nicephorus and Sapricius: *Saints' Lives:* Feb. 9.

b. It destroys the power of meriting:

"If I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

c. It destroys our own peace of mind:

Producing gloom, restlessness and misery.

d. It causes dissensions and quarrels.

"Hatred stirreth up strifes." Prov. x. 12.

Whoso hates another is a murderer:

i. Not always in act and deed.

ii. But in will and desire.

Esau, hating Jacob, thought to murder him: Gen. xxvii. 41.

Aman, preparing a gibbet for Mardochai: Est. v. 14.

iii. He murders his own soul by his grievous sin.

iv. Yet so terrible a sin is not uncommon:

a. Not always in its most ugly form.

b. But in its lesser degree, often.

v. Hence the need of speaking on the subject.

Lessons:

i. Reflect on the grievous nature of this sin.

ii. See if it lurk not in the soul in any degree.

As judged by the signs given above.

iii. If so, resolve at once on removing it.

iv. Though difficult to cure, it can be done, by aid of

a. Divine grace, obtained through prayer.

b. The thought of God's mercy to us, in spite of our sins.

75. HUMILITY.

"Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God." 1 Pet. v. 6.

i. Who, if only he reflected, would not humble himself before God?
   a. Who holds the universe in His palm:
   b. Whose hand is mighty to destroy:
   c. Who hurled forth the proud angels from Heaven.

ii. Consider the virtue of humility, so becoming the creature.

Humility;

i. Virtue by which, through true self-knowledge, man appears vile in his own eyes: *S. Laur. Just.*

ii. Does not consist
   a. In speaking ill of ourselves, which is often pride in disguise.
   b. In merely acknowledging to God we are sinners. But,

iii. Consists essentially
   a. In acknowledging ourselves to be really what we are.
   b. In esteeming ourselves accordingly, and wishing others so to esteem us.
   c. In true and sincere contempt of ourselves.
   d. In referring to God any good we may have, or do. 1 Cor. iv. 7.

iv. Foundation of all virtue and essential to salvation. Humility and the Flower.*

"There are many virgins in Hell, but no humble souls." *O.L. to S. Mary Pazzi.*

v. Its happy effects:
   a. Confidence in God only.
   b. Compunction for sin which displeases Him.
   c. Meekness and gentleness of manner.
   d. Charity and sympathy with all.

vi. Shown by
- *a.* Ready obedience to Superiors, as to God: Lke. x. 16.
- *b.* Yielding to the opinion of others.
- *c.* Modesty in tone and expression.
- *d.* Readiness to seek counsel and help.
- *e.* Absence of ambition, and anxiety about results.
- *f.* Willingness to oblige.
- *g.* Peace of mind amid insult and misfortune.

vii. Examples:
- Joseph, referring interpretation to God. Gen. xl. 8.
- Moses, sent to deliver Israel: Ex. iii. 11.
- Our Lord, King of Heaven and earth.
- The Bl. Virgin: Lke. i. 48.
- The Publican, in the Temple: Lke. xviii.

viii. Advantages and need of:
- *a.* Our Lord declares it necessary to salvation. Mth. xviii. 3.
- *b.* He bids us learn it from Him: Mth. xi. 29.
- ***c.*** The humble
  1. Receive grace from God: 1 Pet. v. 5.
  2. Have great power with Him: Ecclus. xxxv. 21.
- *d.* Humility will guard us against despair.

Lessons:

i. Strive after this virtue, so pleasing to God, so necessary to all.*

ii. Take means to obtain it: *e.g.*
- *a.* Imitation of Our Lord and His Saints.
- *b.* Love of humiliations.
- *c.* Consideration of our own nothingness and sin.
- *d.* Prayer to God to grant it.

iii. The humble shall be exalted in due season. Lke. xviii. 14.

* The flower depends on its root, and if cut off from it withers and dies. So virtue of whatever kind, unless rooted in humility, soon fails and disappears.—*Rodriguez.*

76. PROVIDENCE.

"He hath care of you." 1 Pet. v. 7.

i. Prudent forethought is by no means forbidden; but,
ii. When you have done your best, leave the result to God. For,
iii. There exists in God a two-fold Providence: viz. Attention and will to preserve the *physical* and *moral* order established by Him.
iv. It includes infinite *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, *Power*.

I. **Providence in the Physical Order;**

i. Scripture tells of it:
"Who giveth the beasts their food." Ps. cxlvi. 9.
"Say not, there is no Providence." Eccles. v. 5.
"Thy Providence, O Father, governeth it." Wisd. xiv. 3.

ii. All nations recognize it, even the Pagans: *e.g.*
Every portion of the universe was dedicated to some deity.

iii. The constant succession of the same phenomena:
a. This requires a constant cause, law: therefore a law-giver.
b. Yet He who established law can modify it.
Thus nations have ever prayed to Him in famine, etc.

iv. Manifests itself:
a. In bestowing on creatures all things necessary for their good: *e.g.*
The clothing of animals, according to the climates they inhabit.
Migrations of birds and fishes.
Forms of flowers adapted to reflect the heat to the seed.
b. In protecting creatures against evil: *e.g.*
History of the three children, and of Daniel: Dan. iii. vi.
Every animal has arms of self-defence.*

II. **Providence in the Moral Order:**

i. Scripture testimony:

a. The psalmist bids us trust in God: Ps. liv. 23.

b. The Apostle to-day, in like manner.

"Casting all your care upon Him."

c. Our Lord represents Himself as the Good Shepherd: Jn. x. 11.

d. He taught us to call God our Father: Mth. vi. 9.

e. He tells us to ask for what we need: Mth. vii. 7.

ii. All nations have ever felt

a. That man lives under the government of God.

b. That God is offended by sin and pleased with virtue.

iii. Providence in the physical order implies the same in the moral.

If God provides for the lower creation, how much more for man: Mth. vi. 30.

iv. Shows itself in the many helps given to men, whereby to observe the Law and attain salvation.

Lessons:

i. Meditate on the Providence of God, working out your whole welfare.

ii. Do your best in all things, then trust the rest to God

iii. Be resigned to the Divine Will:

a. In sorrow of mind and soul.

b. In sufferings of body.

c. In all the evils of life.

Knowing well God watcheth over you.

iv. Thank God for all that befalls you, like Holy Job: i. 21.

* The *Bee* has its sting—The *Cuttlefish*, common along our coasts, is able to emit a blackish substance like ink, which darkens the water, and so enables it to escape pursuit—The *Electrical Fish*, in the Bay of Biscay, can give shocks that have sufficient power to stun, or even to kill other fish that may attack it.

77. SS. PETER AND PAUL.

i. Feast of the two great pillars of the Church, SS. Peter and Paul.

ii. Appropriate occasion to consider some points and lessons of their lives.

I. **S. Peter**; "Prince of the Apostles."

i. First Vicar of Christ in the Church.
Bishop of Antioch 7 years, then of Rome for 25.

ii. Three chief points in his career.

a. His *Fall:* Mth. xxvi.

1. At the voice of a servant, three-fold denial of our Lord.
2. As we perhaps fall, through
   - α. Human respect; or,
   - β. Fear of difficulties that do not exist.
3. Caused by
   - α. His neglect of prayer, sleeping instead.
   - β. His self-confidence, remaining in the danger.
   - γ. Seeking human comfort, "warming himself."

b. His *conversion:* Lke. xxii.

1. Our Lord looked on him with love.
   How often does He do so with us!
2. S. Peter then remembered the warning he had received.
   - α. Had he always done so, he had not fallen.
   - β. We need to remember God's word in meditation.
3. He went forth:
   - α. Away from the danger; while,
   - β. We often hesitate to give up occasions of sin.

Yet violence is necessary to gain Heaven: Mth. xi. 12.

4. He wept bitterly:
   - *a.* Through sincerity and depth of love.
   - *β.* At having offended so loving a Master.
   - *γ.* All through his life, according to tradition.
   - *δ.* Happy we, if our tears be as his.

c. His *appointment* as Head of the Church: Mth. xvi.

iii. Writer of two canonical Epistles.

iv. Persecution, and crucifixion under Nero, A.D. 67.
Head downwards, out of a spirit of humility.

II. **S. Paul:** "Apostle of the Gentiles."

i. Incidents of his career: Acts ix.
   - *a.* A blasphemer, and persecutor of the Church: 1 Tim. i. 13.
   - *b.* His miraculous conversion, now "a vessel of election."
   - *c.* His wanderings and sufferings: 2 Cor. xi.
   - *d.* Burning zeal for souls during 26 years.

ii. The writer of many Epistles:
Of which we often hear on Sundays.

iii. As a Roman citizen, beheaded, A.D. 67.
The three fountains.*

Lessons:

i. Prayer to-day for the Pope and the Church.

ii. Fidelity to the Faith of Peter.

iii. Defence of the rights of the Holy See.

iv. These two Saints, examples of
   - *a.* Zeal for souls.
   - *b.* Courage and fortitude in trial.
   - *c.* Humble and sincere repentance.

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* S. Paul was martyred about a mile beyond the magnificent basilica of S. Paul's outside the walls. His head bounded three times after his decapitation, and from the spots where it touched the earth there burst forth fountains of water which still exist, an altar now standing over each.

78. DEVOTION TO THE HOLY SEE.

"Prayer was made without ceasing . . . for him." Acts xii. 5.

i. These words show the love of the early Christians for the Vicar of Christ.

ii. This love and devotion ever the mark of a good Catholic. Consider

Some reasons for this devotion:

i. Peter is supreme Head of the Church:
   a. The Faith is now everywhere attacked, and we need his help.
   b. The special office of S. Peter is to strengthen our Faith.
   c. Devotion to him will inspire love for the Faith.

ii. Peter represents the principle of Authority:
   a. The sin of the age is pride and rebellion.
      In individuals and homes, then against Church and State.
   b. The religious condition of England like that of Babel.
      No one admits any authority outside himself.
   c. This spirit often found among Catholics too.
      In criticisms, disrespect, disobedience, etc.
   d. Devotion to S. Peter inspires docility, and reverence for authority.

iii. Peter is the father of the Sacerdotal Order:
   a. The unity of the priesthood takes its rise from him.
      All engaged in the pastoral office work under him.
   b. He needs labourers animated with his spirit.
      1. The harvest is great and ready: Mth. ix. 37.
      2. Prayer necessary for obtaining labourers.
      3. Devotion to S. Peter will help to gain vocations.
   c. Priests themselves need a patron and model.
      Both these they have in S. Peter, the father of their Order.

iv. Knowledge and love of Peter can alone restore England to the Faith.

a. Apostasy from Peter, the great sin of the 16th c.
b. Thousands of our countrymen are now out of the Church, through ignorance of Peter's claims.
c. Anglicans hold the teaching of the early centuries to be pure. Hence,
The teaching of those ages should to them be conclusive.*
d. To spread the love of Peter will be to help on England's conversion.
Cultivate therefore and extend this devotion.

v. The Pope governs the whole Church, and is the channel of graces to all.
a. He can therefore claim our help in his temporal wants.
b. For centuries, he owned temporal means, provided by the Faithful.
c. In recent years, the Revolution has despoiled him of these.
d. Hence the re-establishment of Peter's Pence, or Rome Scot.
1. First introduced by the Anglo-Saxons in the 8th c.
2. Less than £300,000 a year suffices for the government of the Church.
3. Nearly £500,000 a year required by the English Government, for printing and stationery alone!
e. The Pope has a claim, in gratitude and justice, on our temporal help: 1 Cor. ix. 7—11.

Lessons:

i. Prayer to S. Peter for firmness in the Faith.
ii. The devotion of Petertide—June 29 to Aug. 1.
iii. Love, reverence and obedience to the Pope, as to Peter.
iv. Almsdeeds, in the form of Peter Pence.
v. Prayer for the return of England to Peter's Fold.

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* Take as an example the words of S. Cyprian, A.D. 248: "There is but *one* baptism and *one* Holy Ghost, and *one* Church founded by Christ on *Peter*, as the source and principle of *unity*."
Also these of S. Ambrose, A.D. 385: "They have not Peter's inheritance, who have not Peter's Chair."

79. THE TRIALS OF LIFE.

"The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come." Rom. viii. 18.

i. Suffering in some form or other the lot of all men.
ii. Too often borne in impatience and rebellion against God.
iii. A few thoughts may help us to Christian resignation.

The sufferings of life:

i. Are of many kinds:
   a. In the *body:* sickness, accidents, poverty.
   b. In the *mind:* anxiety, fear, ill-will of men.
   c. In the *soul:* temptation, desolation, scruples.
ii. In themselves, they cannot compare with the glory to be revealed.
   How can the temporal weigh with the eternal! Yet,
iii. Vivified by charity, and borne for God, they *are* worthy of it. For,
   a. They thus become works of grace.
   b. Grace here is the seed of glory hereafter.
iv. A small seed can produce large results:
   As an acorn, the oak. So,
v. Sufferings and trifles done for God may merit eternal reward.
   The piece of gold.*
vi. Hence the Saints, with this thought in view, have prayed for trials.
   "To suffer, or to die." *S. Teresa.*

Means to lighten our sufferings:

i. Prayer for strength.
   "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee." Ps. xlix. 15.
   "He shall cry to Me, and I will hear him." Ps. xc. 15.
   "They cried to the Lord . . . and He delivered them." Ps. cvi. 13.
   "Ask and it shall be given you." Mth. vii. 7.

ii. The Holy Eucharist:

"Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that afflict me." Ps. xxii. 5.

a. The food that strengthens the soul in everything.

b. Wherein the Martyrs found their courage.

c. Where we too must seek support.

d. To be often received, therefore, if only worthily.

iii. Foresee and prepare for your crosses.

Our Lord forewarned His Apostles. Jn. xvi. 4.

iv. Consider the Providence of God:

a. Who ordains all for the best.

b. Who watches over all His creatures.

c. Who will not suffer us to be tried beyond our strength: 1 Cor. x. 13.

v. Consideration of past sin:

a. Mortal sin deserves eternal punishment.

b. When forgiven, it still deserves chastisement.

c. Even venial sin demands reparation to God.

d. Nothing so effectual for this, as trials borne for Him.

vi. Think of the future reward:

a. Anything done for God's sake merits glory hereafter.

The cup of cold water. Mth. x. 42.

b. How much more, painful crosses borne in resignation.

c. This thought has given courage to the Martyrs and Saints.

Conclusion:

i. Use these helps amid "the sufferings of this time."

ii. They will lighten your burden, and inspire fresh courage through life.

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* A small piece of gold may be worth a large object, such as a box or a book, both by its own intrinsic value, and by the common estimation of men. So a work, though small in itself, but done for God, may merit an eternal reward, both through its own dignity and worth, and in consequence of the promises of God.—*A Lapide.*

80. OUR HOME IN GOD.

"The creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God."
Rom. viii. 19.

i. Man is made for happiness.
   a. He is always seeking it.
   b. Sometimes where it is not: *e.g.* in sin. Yet,
   c. Happiness is the end he aims at.
ii. Consider the true happiness to be revealed to us—Heaven.

Description of our future Home:

i. The Majesty of God, Three in One, outlying beyond all space.
   Infinite in beauty, and power, and love.
ii. The Sacred Humanity of Our Lord, now glorified for ever.
iii. The Bl. Virgin, the Martyrs, the Saints.
iv. The riches and splendour of the Heavenly Jerusalem: Apoc. xxi.
v. Land of happiness and joy, of peace and plenty.
   a. Broad: containing all possible delights, for
      1. Body: life, health, youth, and beauty.
      2. Soul: to see, love and enjoy God for ever.
   b. Long: its goods and joys eternal, unending.
   c. High: noble and exalted above all conception: 1 Cor. ii. 9.
   d. Deep: happiness unmixed with the least evil.
vi. Joy the same for all, though varying in degree.
   Yet all are happy and content, amid the inequality.
vii. Three classes named for special crowns, (aureola):
   a. Doctors of the Church, for resisting the *Devil:* Dan. xii. 3.
   b. Martyrs, for overcoming the *World.*
   c. Virgins, for subduing the *Flesh.*

Our life in that Home:

i. To *see* God:
   a. In Himself, and all His divine perfections.
   b. His mercies and love to man.
   c. With faculties of soul and body, illumined by the Light of Glory.

ii. To *love* God:
   a. With intense energy and devotion, as being created for Him.
   b. Praise, blessing and thanksgiving. And,
   c. In and for Him, all things as He loves them.

iii. To *enjoy* God:
   a. In knowledge and love, the Blessed possess God.
   b. In this possession, they enjoy Him.
   c. Joy that would break the hearts of all men, as a drop only to our joy in God!

iv. All for ever and without end.
   a. Without fear of loss or diminution.
   b. Its very security constituting one of its joys.
   c. An eternity of good, for a moment of trial!

v. Examples:
   S. Paul could not recount the beauty of Heaven: 1 Cor. ii. 9.
   S. Adrian, converted by the thought of it: Spt. 8.
   S. Stephen strengthened by sight of it: Acts vii. 55.

Conclusions:

i. Are our present tastes fitting us for this Home?

ii. Is our present life preparing us for it?
   This should be our one thought and care.

iii. The thought of this revelation to be made to us is
   a. A great incentive to virtue.
   b. A preservative against sin.
   c. A source of filial fear and love.
   d. A source of strength and courage in trial.

iv. Acts of trust and desire of Heaven, and of longing for God!

81. CHRISTIAN UNITY.

"Be ye all of one mind." 1 Pet. iii. 8.

i. A father desires perfect union among his children.
ii. Men constitute one large family, with God as their Father.
iii. Unity and brotherly love most befit creatures in their mutual intercourse.

To be shown in two ways chiefly, viz.:

I. Watchfulness over the Tongue:

i. Constant restraint of it, an effect and a sign of the control of the passions.
ii. It is not only perfection, but the summit of perfection.
"Who is there that hath not offended with his tongue?" Ecclus. xix. 17.
"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." Jas. iii. 2.
iii. A difficult undertaking:
a. Loquacity not the least of the faults of fallen nature.
1. Whatever the mind conceives we long to speak.
2. This inborn propensity hard to resist. For,
"Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh." Mth. xii. 34.
b. It is difficult to control the imagination. And, Language is the fruit of thought, and an index of the heart.
A saying of Socrates.*
c. Watchfulness has so many circumstances to consider (time, place, etc.).
A work beyond the powers of unaided nature.
d. Man is prone to praise himself and blame others. Yet,
iv. Who can enumerate the evils of neglect of this? *E.g.*
a. Misunderstandings, so hard to repair.
b. Bickerings and heart-burnings.
c. Damage to reputation and good name.
d. Injury to temporal prospects.
e. Reparation so necessary, yet so difficult.

v. Thus, to refrain one's tongue is essential to peace and harmony.

II. Taking opportunity of helping others:

i. The members of the human body mutually aid each other.
The eyes guide the feet.
The hand feeds the stomach. Now,

ii. We are all members of one large body, or family. Hence,

iii. We must endeavour to aid and help one another: *e.g.*
a. By the various works of charity and love.
b. By sympathy with others in their trials.
c. By kindness of word and act.
d. We must seek after peace with all men.
The divine gift of Christ to the earth: Lke. ii. 14.

iv. True fraternal charity requires
a. Intelligence, that we may see
1. The grounds on which we must base our love.
2. The manner of showing it, to be pleasing to God.
b. Devotedness, a readiness to make sacrifices for others.
In time, means and personal service.
c. Restraint of the Tongue (above).
d. Supernatural Motive, to make it truly effective and meritorious.
The Philanthropy of the day, loving merely the body, is not Christian charity.

v. Such charity will greatly tend to Christian Unity among brethren.

Lessons:

i. Examine yourselves as to the use of the tongue, and the law of charity.
a. Reparation for the faults of the past.
b. Resolution as to the future, on these points.

ii. How good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity! Ps. cxxxii. 1.

* Socrates used to say: "Speak, that I may see what you are," implying that, by a man's language, he could judge the character of his mind and heart.—*A Lapide.*

82. THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

"The eyes of the Lord are upon the just . . . and upon them that do evil." 1 Pet. iii. 12.

i. Among the practices of perfection, the Saints strongly commend the presence of God.

ii. God abides in all things and everywhere, by His presence and power.

iii. It is well to recall this truth, for it is

I. A check on the Passions.

i. Even the pagans recognized that a witness to our daily lives would prevent many sins.*

ii. How much more the thought of God's Presence.
No subject would dare to rebel, under the very eyes of his sovereign!

iii. God knows and sees all things, even our very thoughts.

a. Who will sin, remembering the eyes of God are upon him?
Susanna and the Elders: Dan. xiii. 23.

b. Who will sin, knowing God can see and cast him into hell?

c. Who will sin, knowing this God will be his judge?

d. In solitude and darkness, God is ever present with us.

iv. This thought of God's presence truly a check on the passions.

v. How many lost souls would have been saved, had they realized this truth.
Let us learn by their experience!

II. A spur to Virtue.

i. Scripture instructs us that this practice leads to perfection.

"Walk before Me and be perfect." Gen. xvii. 1.

ii. It tells of great servants of God adopting it. *E.g.*
Noah walked with God and was perfect: Gen. vi. 9.
Abraham (as above): Gen. xvii. 1.
Isaac walked in God's sight: Gen. xlviii. 15.
Ezechias walked before God: Is. xxxviii. 3.
David set the Law of God ever before his eyes: Ps. xv. 8; xxiv. 15.

iii. Progress in virtue, a natural result of such practice. Comparisons.†

iv. Saints and Holy Writers have extolled it: *e.g.*
S. John Chrysostom: Jan. 27.
S. Basil: June 14.
S. Teresa: Oct. 15.

v. Take it up, then, as a great aid to perfection.

Means of practising it;

i. By aid of the imagination, representing God as
a. The Babe of Bethlehem.
b. The Child at Nazareth.
c. The Missionary in Palestine.
d. The Victim on Calvary; or,
e. The Prisoner in the Tabernacle.
Each one, as his fancy and devotion may suggest to him.

ii. By acts of faith in God's presence, and ejaculatory prayers.
Knowing we are plunged in it, as a bird in the air.

iii. By seeing God in His creatures (stars, flowers, events of life).

iv. By sanctification of our daily actions, doing them for God.

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* Seneca advised his friend Lucillus to keep before his mind some virtuous man and to imagine this person continually looking at him, saying that by means of this imaginary witness of his actions he would avoid many of his sinful doings.

† Everything is by so much the more perfect as it approaches nearer to the source of its being; that water is clearest which is drawn at the fountain-head; that heat is the most intense which is nearest the fire. So the closer our union with God, the more do we advance in perfection.—*Scaramelli.*

83. EFFECTS OF BAPTISM.

The reference to Baptism in to-day's Epistle suggests the thought of speaking on the effects of this Sacrament.

Baptism:

i. Cleanses the soul from sin:
   a. Giving us the robe of sanctifying grace.
   b. Making us friends of God, for the first time.
   c. Yet not removing the consequences of sin:
      1. Temptations and trials of many kinds; which are
      2. Helps to humility, and occasions of merit.

ii. Makes us Christians:

"Your bodies are the members of Christ." 1 Cor. vi. 15.

   a. Uniting us to our Lord, as members to the head.

"I am the vine, you the branches." Jn. xv. 5.

   b. Happy union, tending to give merit to all we do.
   c. This is the Sacramental Character conferred by Baptism;
      1. Which remains in the soul for eternity.
      2. Hence this Sacrament may not be repeated. Conditional Baptism is not a second Baptism.

iii. Makes us children of God:
   a. Christ is Son of God by nature, from all eternity.
   b. We are sons of God by adoption, in Baptism.

"You have received the spirit of adoption of sons." Rom. viii. 15.

   c. The gates of His kingdom are thrown open to us. As the Heavens opened at Our Lord's Baptism: Mth. iii. 16.
   d Happy privilege which enables us to call God our Father!

iv. Makes us members of the Church: Acts ii. 41.
  a. Hence called the "Gate of the Church."
  b. Giving right and title to the other Sacraments.
  c. Yet, of itself, it will not save all.
    Adults must fulfil its obligations.
v. Remits also actual sins: Rom. vi. 4.
  a. Our own personal offences, great and small.
    1. Presupposing sorrow for them.
    2. Typified by the cleansing of Naaman: 4 Kgs. v. 14.
  b. Along with all punishment due to them.
    Hence no Satisfaction imposed, as in Penance.
vi. Imposes on adults the obligation of renouncing
  a. The *Devil:*
    1. Author of evil, and murderer of souls.
    2. Who strives to undo the work of Baptism.
  b. His *Works:*
    1. Sin of any and every kind.
    2. His work is to lead souls from God.
  c. His *Pomps:* 1 Jn. ii. 16.
    1. Concupiscence of the flesh—self-indulgence.
    2. Concupiscence of the eyes—love of wealth.
    3. Pride of life—ambition of place and power.
  These the Baptismal promises, made by our sponsors in our name.

Lessons:

i. Behold, and forget not, all you owe to God in Baptism.*
ii. Gratitude to Him, for putting it within the reach of all.
iii. Allow no unnecessary delay in procuring it for children.
iv. Know how to give it, in case of necessity.
v. Meditate on and renew your Baptismal Vows.

* S. Francis of Sales used to gather his young companions around the font, where they had been baptized, and remind them of all they had there received. After saying together the "Glory be to the Father," they kissed the font with reverence, and then dispersed for their games.—*His Life:* Jan. 29.

84. THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

"We believe that we shall live together with Christ." Rom. vi. 8.

i. A glorious immortality, the reward of a good life upon earth.
ii. Take occasion to speak of the Resurrection—the gate to that happy life.

Resurrection of the Body:

i. A truth known under the Old Law:
   a. The patriarchs believed it: Job xix. 26.
   b. The prophets predicted it: Ezech. xxxvii. 6: Dan. xii. 2.
   c. The pagans also knew it.
ii. In the New Law:
   a. Christ confirmed this belief: Jn. v. 29: vi. 55.
   b. The Apostles preached it: Acts xvii. 32: 1 Cor. xv.
   c. The Church teaches it -eleventh article of the Creed.
iii. At the end of time, for the General Judgment.

The same Bodies:

i. Physically identical: not a new creation, but a restitution.
ii. With all their limbs, no matter where left on earth.
iii. In the proportions of manhood, like Our Lord in *His* resurrection.
iv. With all their senses, except perhaps the sense of taste.
v. Without the defects of this life, *e.g.* blindness.
vi. The Martyrs with their scars, for their greater glory. Like Our Lord with His five wounds.
vii. In resplendent glory, or hideous deformity.

Pledges of the Resurrection:

i. The Old Testament gives three cases of restoration to life: viz.
   a. The widow's son at Sarepta: 3 Kgs. xvii. 22.
   b. The child of the Sunamite: 4 Kgs. iv. 34.
   c. The man in the tomb of Eliseus: 4 Kgs. xiii. 21.

ii. In the New Testament:
  a. The daughter of Jairus, just dead: Mth. ix. 25.
  b. The widow's son, on the way to burial: Lke. vii. 15.
  c. Lazarus, dead four days: Jn. xi. 44.
  d. Tabitha, by S. Peter: Acts ix. 40.
  e. Eutychus, by S. Paul: Acts xx. 10.
iii. Saints have raised the dead to life: *e.g.*
  S. Dominic: Aug. 4.
  S. Francis Xavier: Dec. 3.
iv. Reason suggests the Resurrection:
  a. Body and soul are made for each other, here and hereafter.
  b. The *whole* man seeks for happiness, for which he is made.
    To be obtained fully only in the Resurrection.
  c. The bodies of the Saints shared their sufferings; so also the reward.
  d. The bodies of the lost shared their pleasures; so also the punishment.
    All this can be only through the Resurrection.
v. Analogies in Nature:
  a. Day dies down to night and returns: (daily resurrection).
  b. Summer, followed by winter, returns: (annual resurrection).
  c. Seed in the soil corrupts, and then springs up.
  d. Vegetation is renewed year after year.
  e. All things revive for man: shall not man be restored to himself?

Lessons:

i. Honour your body, and abuse it not by sin.
  a. The Church anoints it, and consecrates it to God.
  b. She respects it, and lays it in blessed soil.
ii. Bear patiently sufferings and death, in view of a glorious future.
iii. From this take comfort in the death of friends: 1 Thess. iv. 12.

85. REPARATION FOR SIN.

"Now yield your members to serve justice unto sanctification."
Rom. vi. 19.

i. All men sin before God in some degree.
ii. All must therefore repair the past, and atone for evil done:
Giving now to virtue what hitherto they had given to sin.

Reparation for Sin:

i. Every sin implies two things:
a. *Guilt* in the soul, to be forgiven.
b. *Punishment* for that guilt, to be undergone.
ii. God often pardons sin, without pardoning the guilt: *e.g.*
Adam and Eve forgiven, yet condemned to death: Gen. iii.
David's sin forgiven, yet punished in the death of his child: 2 Kgs. xii. 14.
iii. This punishment may be:
a. *Eternal*, remitted by the Sacrament, or perfect Contrition.
b. *Temporal*, partly remitted by Good Works and Penances.
iv. More easy and efficacious here on earth than hereafter in Purgatory.
For the former is voluntary, but the latter, involuntary.

Means of making reparation:

i. GOOD WORKS, comprised chiefly under three heads, viz.
a. *Prayer*, which appeases *God*.
For such sins as blasphemy, neglect of Mass.
b. *Fasting*, which chastises *Ourselves*.
For sins of self-indulgence in any form.
c. *Almsdeeds*, which satisfies our *Neighbour*.
For any injustice we may have done him.
d. Good works are also meritorious of reward when done for God.
The cup of cold water: Mth. x. 42.

ii. PENANCES:

"Do penance for all your iniquities." Ezech. xviii. 30.
"Except you do penance, you shall perish." Lke. xiii. 5.

a. Anything laborious or painful borne for God.
b. Patience in labour, toil, suffering, etc.
S. Aloysius and the weather.*
c. Acts of mortification and self-denial.
d. Will do no injury, if undertaken in prudence.
S. Hilarion lived 80 years: Oct. 21.
S. Jerome „ 100 „ Sept. 30.
S. Antony „ 105 „ Jan. 17.
All, men of austere lives.
e. Will not make life miserable; on the contrary.
S. Jerome, amid his penances, seemed as in Paradise.
S. Francis Xavier cried "Enough, O Lord," in the joy he felt in penance: Dec. 3.
See the joy and happiness found in religious houses.
f. Hence fear not the spirit of penance and self-denial.
In some degree, it is necessary for salvation.
g. All meritorious to repair sin, and shorten its punishment.
h. All, then, can and must, do penance in some form or other.
Even invalids and the sick, at least by patience and resignation.

Lessons:

i. Follow the advice of the text and repair sin now.
ii. A Christian is "one born to penance."
iii. While making reparation for sin, Penance also subdues the passions, and will make death sweet.

* S. Aloysius, speaking of the inconveniences of the heat and cold of the seasons, said that of all mortifications they were the most pleasing to God, for two reasons: because they came from God's hand and should therefore be most dear to us; and, because they are more hidden and thus less exposed to the dangers of vanity or pride.—*Cat. en Ex.*

86. HELL.

"The wages of sin is death." Rom. vi. 23.

i. After the resurrection, Heaven or Hell the eternal lot of all men.
ii. The Epistle to-day reminds us Hell is the result of mortal sin.
iii. Let us meditate on this important subject—eternal death.

Eternal Death, or Hell.

"The wages of sin is death." Rom. vi. 23.

i. Place of punishment for all who die in mortal sin.
ii. The country of despair and useless tears.
  a. Long: its pains are all eternal.
  b. Broad: containing all manner of torments for soul and body.
  c. High: its torments raised to the highest degree.
  d. Deep: its anguish real, unmixed with any solace.
iii. Intensity of punishment proportioned to the guilt of each one.
  Every sense and faculty having its own peculiar suffering.
iv. Lasting for ever, without hope of release.
  "Their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished." Mrk. ix. 43.
  The maddening thought of all!
v. The two great evils of Hell are:

I. The Pain of Loss: separation from God: Mth.xxv.41.
  i. The greatest of all the torments the damned endure.
  ii. The soul, made for God and once freed from the earth, longs for Him with intense yearning. But,
  iii. God in His anger now repels the soul from Him.
  iv. This pain of loss the damned feel in their
    a. Understanding, knowing
      1. God, as deserving their love, but now their Avenger, whom they hate.
      2. The saints and their joys, but only to envy and curse them.
      3. The graces received in life, and the justice of their sentence.

4. The evil done, but only to regret it in unavailing remorse.
5. Their former companions saved, with perhaps fewer graces.
6. Their torments now useless for merit or expiation.
7. Their damnation entirely their own fault.

b. Memory:

1. Wondrously accurate and unfailing since the Judgment.
2. Ever suggesting reflections of anguish, hate and despair.

c. Will:

1. Conscious of their utter slavery and misery.
2. Intensely hating God, His Saints and themselves.
3. Deep sorrow, not for sin but, their own punishment and ruin.
4. Wishing for one hour for repentance, but all in vain.

v. Oh, the unbearable suffering of eternal separation from God!

II. **The Pain of Sense**: fire: Mth. xxv. 41.

i. As appears from some fifteen passages of Holy Scripture.
ii. According to theologians, material fire.
iii. Not like earthly fire, made for our comfort and daily wants.
iv. But lit up by the anger of God for punishment.
v. Endowed with special properties, to burn soul as well as body.
Tormenting each sense and faculty with merciless power.
vi. Burning ever, yet consuming never! Eternal pain!

Lessons:

i. Meditation on Hell will act as
a. A preservative against sin: Ecclus. vii. 40.
b. A spur to vigilance and care.
c. A source of wholesome fear of God.
ii. Many Saints have trembled, as they thought over it. Let *us* fear also, and be wise in time.

87. MORTIFICATION.

"Mortify the deeds of the flesh." Rom. viii. 13.

i. The passions of man tend to lead him from God.
ii. If he wish for eternal life, these must be resisted.
iii. By mortification, especially, can we reduce them into subjection.

Spirit of Mortification:

i. Any restraint we place upon ourselves.
ii. Of two kinds:
  a. *Corporal*, or exterior:
    1. Penances inflicted on the body.
    2. Labour, fastings, watchings, etc.
  b. *Spiritual*, or interior:
    1. Subduing the passions of the soul.
    2. Obedience, humiliations, etc.
iii. Advantages:
  a. It tames the body and subjects it to the soul.
    As the servant is subject to his master.
  b. Remission of temporal punishment due to sin.
    Penance is of an expiatory character.
  c. Joy of heart in God's service.
    1. Nothing so unworldly as mortification.
    2. The mortified are void of the world, therefore mirthful.
  d. Great power with God.
    1. By suffering, our Lord redeemed the world.
    2. The gift of miracles follows close on austerity.
    3. Lack of self-denial makes prayer less availing.
  e. Strength to our piety and devotion.
    As gymnastics give muscle and strength to the body.

f. Without it, no Christian truly fulfils his calling.
We are the disciples of a crucified Lord.

iv. Without *exterior* mortification, *interior* will not be robust.

Occasions for Mortification.

i. *Exterior:*
- *a.* Afflictive penances (discipline, fasting, etc.).
- *b.* Custody of the senses, the preservative of virtue.
- *c.* Bearing sickness and pain.
- *d.* Works of mercy to the poor, etc.
- *e.* The vicissitudes of life.
  Labour, poverty, heat and cold (No. 85*).

ii. *Interior:*
- *a.* Mortification of the judgment and will.
- *b.* Kindly interpretations.
- *c.* Bearing with the tongues of others.
- *d.* Spiritual desolation and temptation.

Lessons:

i. Two classes of men need mortification:
- *a. Saints*, to remain innocent: *e.g.*
  Job xlii. 6.
  Daniel ix. 3.
  The Baptist: Mth. iii. 4.
  S. Aloysius: June 21.
- *b. Sinners*, to repair the past, and do better: *e.g.*
  The Ninevites: Jon. iii.
  S. Margaret of Cortona: Feb. 22.
  S. Mary of Egypt: Apl. 9.
  S. Mary Magdalen: July 22.

ii. Mortification will be our true perseverance.

88. THE FEAR OF GOD.

"You have not received the spirit of bondage in fear." Rom. viii. 15.

i. The Fear of the Roman converts was not as that of the ancient Jews.
   Evidently the Apostle refers to the fear in which the Law was received in Sina.

ii. There is a fear which is pleasing to God—a gift of the Holy Ghost, viz.

Fear of the Lord:

i. Filial and reverential, leading us to avoid offending God.
   An awe which makes us dread God as a tender father.

ii. Other kinds of fear: *e.g.*
   a. *Worldly* fear, of losing what the world can give.
   b. *Servile* fear, forsaking evil through dread of punishment only.
   c. *Carnal* fear, of sickness, suffering or inconvenience.

iii. Gift found in Christ Himself, as seen in
   a. His veneration for the Father.
   b. His dependence on God.
   c. His submission to the divine Will: Mth. xxvi. 39.
   d. His hatred of sin.

iv. In no way opposed to Hope: Scripture enjoins them both.*
   a. We must *hope* for the rewards of God: Ps. cxviii. 112.
   b. We must *fear* His punishments: Lke. xii. 5.
   Both therefore are legitimate motives of action.
   c. They present to us two necessary aspects of God.
   1. The sternness of His Justice: and,
   2. The tenderness of His Mercy.

v. Effects of holy fear:
   a. Respect for God and His judgments.
   To the soul animated with Fear, God alone is Great.
   b. Respect for the Church, Her Laws, Ceremonies, Feasts.

"He that heareth you heareth Me." Lke. x. 16.

c. Respect for the creatures of God.
All come from Him and bear some relation to Him.
d. Hatred and horror of sin: for,
This fear makes God's majesty, etc., to shine forth clearly.
e. Deep humility, and watchfulness.
f. Desire of being purified by Confession.

vi. Necessity for this Fear:
a. A first condition for Wisdom and Salvation.
"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Prov. i. 7.
"With fear and trembling, work out your salvation." Phil. ii. 12.
b. It prevents man degrading himself by sin.
c. It preserves him his liberty and dignity.
d. It guards against unworthy fear (above).

vii. Is opposed to the spirit of Pride.
a. Making us feel our nothingness and sin.
b. Giving a distrust of our own judgment and will.

viii. Means to obtain it:
a. Prayer and petition to God.
"Pierce thou my flesh with Thy fear." Ps. cxviii. 120.
b. The thought of God's Majesty, Sanctity and Power.
c. Reflection on our own wretchedness and sin.
d. Meditations on the four last things: Ecclus. vii. 40.

ix. Examples of this salutary Fear.†

Lessons:

i. Seek to obtain so precious and necessary a gift.
ii. On Pentecost especially, beg the Holy Ghost to strengthen it in you.
iii. Holy Fear will bring you joy and gladness of heart: Ecclus. i. 12.

* Hope is like the sails of a ship, and Fear is its ballast: the one impels, the other restrains; and between the two, there is equilibrium.

† S. Alphonsus (Aug. 2) was full of fear, when a slight lie had escaped his lips, and he left the world in consequence—S. Cajetan (Aug. 7) feared for his soul amid the lawful splendours of the court of Rome—S. Rose (Aug. 30) cut off her hair, through fear of the danger it might cause her.—*Lives of the Saints*.

89. THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

"Some of them tempted, and perished by the serpents." 1 Cor. x. 9.

i. The Jews murmured against Moses, and so tempted God: Numb. xxi. 5.
ii. Whereupon fiery serpents were sent among them.
iii. At the prayer of Moses, God gave them a remedy—the brazen serpent.

This Serpent, a figure of Christ: 1500 years B.C.

i. The Jews were bitten by the serpents, and many perished.
Fiery, *i.e.* in the inflammatory effects of their bite.
a. The human race bitten by the infernal serpent.
1. This wound brought death into the world.
2. How many die the spiritual death of sin!
3. Though many are healed, how many are killed eternally!

ii. God was moved by the sufferings of His people.
b. God is also moved by the evils of sinners.
1. He often sent prophets to warn them before punishment.
2. He sent His Son to redeem them.
3. He has given Church and Sacraments, to heal their wounds.

iii. God ordered a brazen serpent to be set up.
1. The people bitten were to look upon this.
2. Thereupon they were healed of their wounds.
α. Not by the Serpent they saw, but by Him it represented.
β. In virtue of their compliance with God's command.
γ. An expression of faith in the divinely appointed means of salvation.
δ. Miraculously, and not in any way through superstitious worship.

c. Our Lord was raised on the Cross: Jn. iii. 14.
1. We, looking to the Cross of Christ, shall be freed from sin.

2. Faith, confidence, and sorrow must animate us in so doing.

iv. The Serpent seen by only one people, the Jews.

d. Our Lord on the Cross, the source of hope for the whole world.

1. He died thereon for all men; and,
2. No one is denied His healing grace who truly repents.

v. The Serpent not long exposed to the people's view. Only while their physical sufferings lasted.

e. Our Lord is seen on the Cross till the end of time.

To bring salvation to all generations.

vi. Only by looking on the Serpent could the wounds be healed.

It was the only means God appointed for that end.

f. Only by the Redemption of the Cross can man be freed from sin.

vii. The Serpent was harmless in itself, but was made like the creatures cursed of God: Gen. iii. 14.

g. Christ, holy and undefiled, was made sin and a curse for us: Gal. iii. 13.

This figure teaches that

i. The Messiah was to cure the diseases of the soul.

ii. To be cured, we must look upon Him, in faith, love, obedience, etc.

iii. He is the only true physician of mankind.

Lessons:

i. Murmur not against authority, lest God be angry and punish you.

ii. What the Serpent was to the Jews, the Cross is to Christians.

iii. Let the Crucifix be found and honoured in every Catholic home.

iv. The Sign of the Cross will help to

a. Revive our *Faith.*

b. Strengthen our *Hope*, and

c. Nourish our *Charity.*

v. As Christ died for all on the Cross, never despair for any sin, nor of any sinner.

90. THE EPISTLE.

"These things . . . are written for our correction." 1 Cor. x. 11.

i. These, the words of the Apostle on the events he relates.
ii. "Our correction," *i.e.* our instruction, as a warning.
iii. See then what the Epistle really says.

Become not idolaters, like some of them:

i. A reference to the golden calf set up by Aaron: Ex. xxxii. 4.
   a. Holocausts and peace-offerings made to the idol
   b. Eating and drinking, in honour of the new god.
   c. Amusements and play of many sorts.
ii. The Corinthians are warned against
   a. Eating meats offered to idols, giving a suspicion of idolatry.
   b. Sinful indulgence of any kind.
   c. Excess in even lawful pleasures; for,
   To all these, the Corinthians were very prone.

Commit not fornication:

i. The Jews had sinned with the daughters of Moab: Numb. xxv.
ii. Three and twenty thousand slain by command of God, in His anger.
iii. S. Paul addresses this warning to the Corinthians, on account of their libidinous propensities.
iv. As God was angered of old, so is He yet by sin.

Tempt not Christ, as some of them tempted:

i. How could the ancient Jews tempt Him, not yet born?
   a. Christ was God from eternity.
   b. The Jews tempted God by speaking against Him: for,
ii. Many complained of
   a. Being led into the desert.
   b. The light food provided for them: Numb. xxi. 5.

iii. Numbers were destroyed by the serpents: *Ibid.* 6.
  a. Called fiery, because of the burning wounds they caused.
  b. Images of the devils, wounding our souls by sin.
iv. The Brazen Serpent was the means of healing them: *Ibid.* 8.
  Type of Christ crucified, and of faith in Him: Jn. iii. 14.
v. Some Corinthians doubted the Resurrection, and S. Paul warns them against thus tempting Christ.

Murmur not:

i. Core and others murmured against Moses and Aaron: Numb. xvi. 2.
  They were swallowed down alive by the earth: *Ibid.* 32.
ii. Then the people also rebelled, after their example.
  Fourteen thousand perished by the destroyer: *Ibid.* 49.
iii. Against such spirit of murmuring, the Apostle also warns his people.

These things written for us:

i. In the crimes here named, S. Paul
  a. Instances sins whereon to reprimand the Corinthians.
  b. Shows God's punishments, so to inspire dread of them.
ii. We also must avoid these same sins: viz.
  a. Idolatry:
    1. Not perhaps the worship of false gods.
    2. But, *e.g.* gluttony and indulgence of the passions.
      Which is a serving of idols: Eph. v. 5.
  b. Fornication, and every sort of impure sin.
  c. Tempting God, especially by presumption.
  d. Murmuring:
    1. Whether directly, against His Providence,
    2. Or indirectly, resisting the will of superiors.
iii. God is the avenger of all these things: 1 Thess. iv. 6.

91. HOLINESS OF LIFE.

i. The Apostle says there are diversities of graces.
ii. One gift is bestowed upon all; viz. grace sufficient for salvation.
iii. To save our souls, we must sanctify them by

Holiness:

i. Man is holy, only in so far as he fulfils God's will.
ii. Now the lives of most men are lives of labour.
iii. Hence, for most men, holiness will lie in the sanctification of their labour.
iv. Take example from the life of the Holy Family.
    1. They were poor, but not in extreme poverty.
    2. Though of royal descent, they were simple, hard-working people.
    a. Joseph:
        1. A humble working-man: Mth. xiii. 55.
        2. Daily labour in his workshop or elsewhere.
        3. Grave and kind, honest and beloved.
    b. Mary:
        1. Household work: cleaning and arranging all things.
        2. Journey to the market and the well, for daily supplies.
        3. Preparation of meals; spinning or weaving. Tradition says the seamless garment was woven by herself.
        4. Daily devotions to God; and practice of the Christian virtues.
    c. Jesus:
        1. Would likewise share the work.
        2. Helping His parents, as might be needful.
        3. Accompanying one or both, especially to the synagogue.
v. Thus, for years, was spent the hidden life of the Holy Family.
    a. Amid hardships, toil and privation.
    b. Yet with contentment, mutual affection, and love of God.

c. Thus was everything sanctified to a degree none could equal. But,

vi. We may try and imitate their holiness: for,

1. Have not most of us similar duties to fulfil? and,
2. Have we not all of us our lives to sanctify?

a. *Women!* mothers, daughters, servants, saying you have no time for this!

1. You have washing, cooking, mending to do.
2. But look at Mary, see her work, and feel her hands.

Yet was ever creature as holy as she?

b. *Men!* husbands, sons, artisans, and labourers.

1. You complain of your unceasing work.
2. But see S. Joseph, and even Jesus, working as hard as you and as long.

Yet was any one ever so holy as they?

Oh! the nobility of labour and work, as sanctified by the Holy Family!

vii. Examine and correct all false ideas of holiness.

a. It does not consist in

1. Leaving the world for the cloister, the call of few.
2. Great austerity, singular works, or vows.
3. Prayer alone: Mth. vii. 21.
4. The amount of grace received:
   α. Many receive much and resist it.
   β. Others receive less, but profit by it.
5. Long hours in church, etc. to the neglect of one's duty.

b. It essentially consists in fulfilling perfectly the Will of God in one's state.

viii. Labouring millions! see your examples and encouragement in Mary and Joseph.

a. Begin to realize the simplicity of the work.

1. Doing your duties with pure intention.
2. Joseph was a perfect carpenter: Mary, a perfect wife and mother.

b. Sanctify your ordinary actions:

Herein lies the true philosopher's stone.

c. Thus will your daily toil be the source of

1. *Holiness*, here on earth;
2. *Salvation*, hereafter in Heaven.

92. GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

"There are diversities of graces, but the same Spirit." 1 Cor. xii. 4.

i. Some theologians take this text to refer to the Gifts of the Holy Ghost.
ii. It at least furnishes an opportunity of studying them.

Gifts of the Holy Ghost:

i. Since the Fall, two spirits hover over every soul:
   a. The Holy Spirit and the Wicked Spirit.
   b. We necessarily live under the influence of one or the other.
   c. According as we are thus guided, we shall be saints or reprobates.
ii. The Wicked Spirit, accompanied by seven others more wicked: Mth. xii. 45.
   a. Pride, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Gluttony, Envy, Sloth.
      Who amongst us has not experienced their malign influence?
   b. Inspirers and abettors of all public and private sins and disorders.
iii. The Holy Ghost comes to our aid with seven other Spirits.
      For man of himself is too weak to resist the evil ones.
   These are called the seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost.
iv. Infused habits, enabling us to graceful promptitude in the service of God.
   a. Divine germs of all real human heroism.
   b. Inspirers and promoters of all public and private virtues.
   c. Foundations of all high principles.
   d. Freeing us from the slavery of creatures, and giving true liberty.
   e. Closely connected with the Fruits, and the Beatitudes.
v. Seven in number, enumerated by Isaias xi. 2, 3.
   a. Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, Fear.

b. Named in the order of dignity, as found in Our Lord.

c. Hence, the repetition of *seven* in canonical penances, etc.

Penitents regaining the seven Gifts, after sin.

vi. Inseparable from each other, as bound up in Charity.

As Charity is lost or regained, so are they.

vii. They perfect the whole soul of man; by

a. Illumination of the *Intellect.*

b. Sanctification of the *Heart.*

c. Union of the *Will* with God.

viii. Necessary to salvation:

"God loveth none but him that dwelleth with Wisdom." Wisd. vii. 28.

"He that is without Fear cannot be justified." Ecclus. i. 28.

As with the first and the last, so with the intervening gifts.

ix. They exist, though unequally, in all who are in grace.

The human countenance the same in all, though varying in detail.

x. They lie dormant till cultivated, and till occasion brings them into activity.

Comparisons of fire and harmony.*

xi. Opposed to the seven evil spirits, which attack man in his whole being.

xii. To resist these evil spirits, we need these seven divine forces of God.

Marvellous tools, wherewith to work the sanctification of the soul.

Hence:

i. Make these Gifts the object of frequent and fervent prayer, especially on Pentecost. But,

ii. Purify your soul from sin for their reception.

iii. When received, cultivate them and allow them to grow and expand:

As buds upon the tree, always unfolding into flower and fruit.

* Fire is always in the flint, but it does not appear until elicited by a stroke; the harp is mute, until the hand of the player elicits the harmony that lies in its strings. So, the soul of man, though containing the whole power of harmony with the divine Will, does not manifest it without the assistance of the "Finger of God."—*Manning.*

93. THE ASSUMPTION B.V.

"I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus." Ecclus. xxiv. 17.

i. The Assumption, the greatest of Mary's feasts, the crowning of a unique career.
ii. Imagine the triumphant return of a victorious hero of war.
iii. But what is that, compared with Mary's exaltation into Heaven!

The Assumption:

i. Feast of the 4th c. in honour of Mary's ascent, body and soul, to Heaven.
   a. At the age of 63, or 72.
   b. At Ephesus, probably, or Jerusalem.
ii. None of Mary's feasts observed in the very early ages.
   a. Lest the pagans, with their goddesses, might think the homage excessive.
   b. Lest some might even pass on to adore her.
iii. Eliseus experienced once the pains of separation: 4 Kgs. ii. 12.
iv. A similar pain the Apostles experienced twice: viz.
   a. At the Ascension of Our Lord (by His own power).
   b. At the Death and Assumption of Mary (by the power of God only).
v. This may be a day of sadness, or joy:
   a. Of sadness, at Mary's leaving us:
   b. Of joy, over her magnificent triumph.
vi. Mary dies, not of old age or sickness, but of love.
   a. To die *in* love, is to die in the state of grace.
      Necessary for salvation, as with all the Just.
   b. To die *for* love, is to die through fidelity to God's law.
      As with the Martyrs, rather than renounce their Faith.
   c. To die *of* love, is that love causes death.
      Thus died Mary, the Virgin Mother.

vii. If it became Mary to die, it became her also that Death's victory should be short, and her tomb be glorious like her Son's.
Tradition, as to the opening of her tomb.
viii. Mary's SOUL has the three-fold aureola in Heaven, of
a. Virgins: "Virgin of Virgins."
b. Doctors: She was teacher of the Apostles even.
c. Martyrs: "Queen of Martyrs."
ix. Mary's BODY enjoys the highest degrees of the glorified state.
a. The face of Moses shone as the sun: 2 Cor. iii. 7. How much more will the body of Mary, most perfect.
b. If she were so perfect on earth, how much more now in Heaven.
c. One of the joys of the Blessed to contemplate.
x. Mary's triumphant assumption a day of
a. Glory to *God*—Father, Son and Holy Ghost: The crowning of the work of His hands.
b. Gladness to the *Angels:* The Introit to-day bids us rejoice with them.
c. Jubilation to the *Saints:* Our own human nature here raised to the height of glory.
d. Happiness to the *Church* on earth: Mary is the Mother of the Faithful.
e. Magnificence to *Mary* herself:
1. Her sorrows turned now to joy.
2. Her trials fully rewarded.
3. Her desire to be reunited to her Son realized.
xi. Not defined as a dogma; yet the teaching and tradition of the Church.
A grievous presumption to question or oppose it.

Lessons:

i. The glory of Heaven is our reward also: encouraging thought!
ii. Coöperation with divine grace, the root of perfection.
iii. Perseverance in love, despite every obstacle.
iv. Devotion to Mary, a pledge of salvation.

94. TYPES OF MARY.

i. To-day's lesson compares Mary to a rose-plant, a cedar, etc.
ii. As Our Lord was typified in the Old Law, so also Mary, His Mother.
iii. These comparisons suggest our considering some types of Our Lady.

I. Eve: *Gen.* ii.

i. Made direct by the hand of God Himself.
Mary the special work of God—His masterpiece in body and soul.
ii. Eve, created in innocence and holiness, happy before the Fall.
Mary's purity inviolate and inviolable, never estranged from God.
iii. The name means, "mother of the living," as mother of mankind.
a. Mary is mother of Jesus, source of the life of our souls.
She is called "our *life*, our sweetness."
b. As Pharao's daughter adopted Moses, so Mary, the Faithful.
iv. But how inferior the type to the reality!
Eve brought us death, by sin: Mary gives us life, by Christ.

II. The Ark of Noah: *Gen.* vi.

i. The Flood, the punishment of the iniquity of men.
Representing the deluge of sin, by which men's souls are ruined.
ii. The Ark and those within alone saved from the universal catastrophe.
Mary, ark of the living God, alone preserved free from all sin.
iii. Contained Noah, the restorer and second father of the human race.
Mary, the second ark, carried Jesus, who restored our souls to grace.

iv. All in the Ark were saved from death in the waters of the Flood.
Mary is our ark of salvation: no true client of hers will perish.

III. **The Burning Bush:** *Ex.* iii.

i. The Lord spoke to Moses in a flame of fire.
A bush burning, without being consumed.

ii. Mary is typified by this burning Bush.
Image of her admirable and perpetual virginity.
a. The Lord rested in the Bush.
The Son of God dwelt in Mary.
b. The Bush was not consumed by the flames.
Mary's Virginity not affected by her Maternity.

iii. Moses had this vision, when God was about to deliver Israel.
a. Mary became Mother, when our redemption was at hand.
b. The figures and symbols of the past were now to be fulfilled.

iv. God appeared not in a tall tree, but in a lowly shrub.
The Son of God born, not of a noble queen but, of a humble virgin.

v. Let *us* go and meditate this miracle: a virgin, bearing the Son of God.

IV. **The Tower of David:** *Cant.* iv. 4.

i. David built a tower on the walls of Jerusalem, well provided with armour.
From this stronghold, all attacks could be resisted.

ii. Mary is a spiritual fortress, a tower of strength.
Solid and secure in virtue against all the powers of Hell.

iii. Mary not only a tower, but the Tower of David:
Descending from David, of whom Christ also came, to defeat the infernal Goliath.

iv. Mary, a tower of defence and a place of refuge.
a. To her we must have recourse in danger.
b. There, repentant sinners may flee from divine vengeance.

Hence:

i. Honour Mary, thus typified in Holy Writ.
ii. Congratulate her on this her greatest Festival.

95. GRACE.

"By the grace of God." 1 Cor. xv. 10.

i. The question of Grace one of the most difficult in all theology.
S. Augustine, its chief exponent: 5th c.
ii. At the same time, a most important one for all.
iii. Try therefore to know something of it.

Grace:

i. A supernatural gift of God, freely bestowed for our sanctification and salvation.
ii. There are many divisions of Grace: consider the two chief: viz.
a. *Habitual*, or sanctifying Grace:
1. Permanently inhering in the soul.
2. Uniting us to God, as His children.
3. The source of actual graces
4. Typified by
The cleansing of Naaman: 4 Kgs. v. 14.
The wedding garment: Mth. xxii. 12.
The parable of the vine: Jn. xv. 5.
b. *Actual* Grace:
1. Not a permanent, but a transient divine influence.
2. Enabling the soul *hic et nunc* to avoid evil and do good.
3. Enlightening the mind, and strengthening the will.
4. Examples:
The preaching of Jonas: Jon. iii.
The descent of the Holy Ghost: Acts ii. 3.
The conversion of S. Paul: *Ibid.* ix.
5. Occasions of actual grace: *e.g.*
α. Sermons: S. Antony, the Hermit: Jan. 17.
β. Good reading: S. Ignatius: Jly. 31.
γ. An accident: S. Norbert: June 6.
δ. A death: S. Francis Borgia: Oct. 10.
ε. Friendly advice: The rich young man: Mth. xix. 21.

6. Means to obtain it:
   - *a.* The performance of good works:
     Especially prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds.
   - *β.* Hearing Mass.
   - *γ.* Receiving the Sacraments.
   - *δ.* Attending instructions.

iii. Effects of divine Grace:
   - *a.* Justification of the soul by freedom from mortal sin.*
   - *b.* We become the temples of God: 1 Cor. iii. 16.
   - *c.* Ease in obeying the divine Law and moral precepts.
   - *d.* Great peace in the mind: Ps. cxviii. 165.
   - *e.* Good works, done for God, and then meritorious for eternity.
   - *f.* We become children of God, and heirs of His Kingdom.
   - *g.* Grace is the root of future glory.
     Our Glory in Heaven, proportioned to our Grace upon earth.

iv. Lost by one mortal sin, though it probably revives on repentance.

v. Without a special revelation, no one knows whether he have grace in the heart, though we may have a moral certitude of it.

Lessons:

i. Value this beautiful gift, producing such fruits in the soul.

ii. Guard it with care, as it may easily be lost: 2 Cor. iv. 7.†

iii. Avoid occasions of sin that expose you to its loss.

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* Some Saints have been permitted to see a soul in grace, and have declared that its dazzling beauty exceeded every splendour they could conceive of on earth.

† "Even if a man have the light of grace and the love of God, let him remember he is still under the open sky and not in the house, and that a breeze may put out this holy light for ever."—*S. Bernard.*

96. CORRESPONDENCE TO GRACE.

"His Grace in me hath not been void." 1 Cor. xv. 10.

i. Whole sanctities may follow correspondence with a single grace!

ii. See what S. Paul became, by accepting the grace given him on his way to Damascus: Acts ix.

iii. To-day he tells us, in the text, that he corresponded with it.

iv. This is a subject of utmost importance, and concerns us all most closely.

Correspondence to Grace

i. Is and implies
   - *a.* Accepting the graces God may bestow.
   - *b.* Habitual attitude of waiting for grace.
   - *c.* Prayer to God that we may use grace rightly.
   - *d.* Renewal of intention to seek God's glory in all things.
   - *e.* Perseverance and heroism in difficulties.

ii. Is absolutely necessary to all of us.

> "God made us without ourselves, but will not save us without ourselves." *S. Aug.*

iii. Is a stimulating source of prayer.

iv. Draws down upon us a number of further graces: These help to form the chain of our final perseverance.

v. Must be
   - *a. Prompt:*
     Without hesitation, once we know the movement to be grace.
   - *b. Brave:*
     1. Gladly believing even in the impossible!
     2. Yet with diffidence of self, and full trust in God.
   - *c. Humble:*
     1. Our own will must disappear before God's.
     2. Being less attached to our work than to Him for whom we do it.
        Otherwise much grace may be lost.
     3. Not resting in our graces: they are but means to an end.
        Thus even the gifts of God may have their dangers.

Neglect of Grace:

i. A secret reserve of God's wrath.
ii. An important witness against us at the Judgment.
iii. Prevents other graces reaching us that were intended for us.
iv. Furnishes food to old habits of sin.
v. Chills fervour into lukewarmness.
vi. Hardens the heart, and intercepts the grace of final perseverance.

Examples of

i. Correspondence with Grace:
Samuel, answering the Lord: 1 Kgs. iii.
The Shepherds, going to the Crib: Lke. ii. 15.
The Magi, leaving their homes: Mth. ii. 2.
The Good Thief: Lke. xxiii. 42.
Saul, thrown to the ground: Acts ix. 6.
ii. Abuse of Grace:
Cain: Gen. iv. 7, 15.
Pharao and the plagues.
The Pharisees, ignoring our Lord's miracles.
The rich young man: Mth. xix. 22.
Judas, called "friend" by his Lord: *Ibid.* xxvi. 50.
The impenitent thief, receiving the same mercies as the other.

Lessons:

i. Learn from both sets of examples to value highly the graces of God.
ii. Resolve now to profit by those you receive.
iii. One grace contains, as it were, another, and tends to bring it to us.
As the acorn truly contains and produces the oak.
iv. One grace rejected may mean the ruin of perseverance: while,
v. Every grace accepted means increased reward hereafter.*
Correspondence with grace is thus our sole work.

* Grace is glory begun, and glory is grace consummated. Grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace in the fruit. Grace is the lowest degree of glory, and glory the highest degree of grace.—*Burkitt.*

97. SECRET WORKINGS OF GRACE.

"Our sufficiency is from God." 2 Cor. iii. 5.

i. How silently work the great forces of Nature: *e.g.*
The morning light steals softly over the world.
Noiselessly the sap stirs the naked trees in spring.
ii. Thus silent is the action of God on matter, but more so still in the immaterial souls of men.
If we cannot follow it in the former, still less in the latter: Lke. xvii. 20.
iii. Consider one of God's spiritual gifts—Grace and its secret workings.

Divine Grace:

i. Man at birth pertains to the order of nature, till Baptism lifts him to a supernatural plane.
a. The difference not at once apparent, yet truly there; as,
b. Between a real and a carved acorn, little difference to the eye, yet in reality what a distance divides them!
c. So, the essential, though invisible, difference between a man in grace, and one devoid of it.
ii. Grace lifts us even above the angels, considered in their nature alone.
a. A greater gift than Creation—a new creation into a higher order.
b. It is literally being "born again:" Jn. iii. 5.
First, children of Adam, by nature; then, of God, by Grace.
iii. This relationship with God bestows upon us
a. Spiritual rank and dignity, beyond description.
We may now address Him as "Our Father."
b. Fellowship with Christ, since we are sons of God.
1. Relationship without an equal in condescension and love.
2. Intensified in the Incarnation, wherein Our Lord embraced

α. Temporal life, that we might acquire the eternal.
β. Poverty, that we might share His riches.
c. Men are proud of noble ancestry.
Yet what compares with the honour of being brothers of Christ!

iv. Grace makes us tabernacles of God: 1 Cor. iii. 16.
a. The Holy Ghost dwells in a soul in Grace.
b. Where He is, there also are Father and Son: Jn. xiv. 23.
c. We are even made partakers of the divine nature: 2 Pet. i. 4.
Hence the enormity of sin, committed by one in grace.
d. The soul does not become God, but God enters its innermost recesses.
As light fills a clear crystal.
e. As bodies reflect light differently, so also souls, their degrees of grace: 1 Cor. xv. 41.

v. Grace also bestows
a. A special *knowledge* of things spiritual; and
b. A *power* to discriminate between them and earthly vanities.
As witness the lives of the Saints and Martyrs.

vi. It makes our every act pleasing to God, if done for supernatural ends.
a. The true "philosopher's stone" (merit).
b. Whereby the future life is made dependent on this one.

vii. Thus is Grace, day by day, secretly working out the principles of future glory.

Lessons:

i. Realize the beauty and effects of Grace, then will you guard it jealously.

ii. Keep it ever bright in the soul, like the wedding garment: Mth. xxii. 12.

iii. Grace, a joygiving thought to sorrowful and sin-laden souls.
They are made for happiness, and through Grace, will find it in eternity.

98. MOSES, A TYPE OF CHRIST.

i. God took 4,000 years to prepare the world for the Messiah.
ii. As one means to this end, He raised up types of Him.
  a. Types show forth His chief characteristics.
  b. The Elders were enlightened to recognize these, and instruct the people therein.
iii. When our Lord came, men could not fail to observe them.
iv. To-day's Epistle refers to Moses, a prominent type of Christ.

Moses, a type: *e.g.*

i. Pharao slaying the male children, when Moses was born: Ex. i. 16.
  a. Herod slaying the Innocents, at the birth of Christ: Mth. ii. 16.
ii. Escape of Moses, in a basket among the sedges: Ex. ii. 3.
  b. Escape of Our Lord, by flight into Egypt: Mth. ii. 14.
iii. Moses was taken to the Court of Pharao to be educated.
  c. Our Lord was reared for a time in the foreign land of Egypt.
iv. Moses later on returned to his brethren, the Israelites.
  d. Our Lord returned to His brethren, the Jews, in Palestine.
v. Moses, chosen of God to deliver Israel from Egypt: Ex. iii. 10.
  e. Our Lord, sent by the Father to deliver man from sin.
vi. Before appearing among the people, Moses passed 40 years in the desert.
  f. Before manifesting Himself to the world, Our Lord spent 30 years at Nazareth.
vii. Moses wrought miracles to prove himself the envoy of God: Ex. iv.
  g. The Gospels relate the miracles Our Lord wrought to prove Himself the envoy, and also the Son of God.

viii. Moses commanded the sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb: Ex. xii. 24.

h. Our Lord, the true Paschal Lamb, sacrificed Himself on Calvary, and is still offered daily on the Altar.

ix. Moses led the Hebrews through the waters of the Red Sea, which then separated them from the Egyptians: Ex. xiv. 22.

i. Christ leads His people through the waters of Baptism, which separates Christians from Infidels.

x. Moses led his people through the desert, towards the Land of Promise.

j. Christ leads His followers, through the desert of life, to the true Land of Promise—Heaven.

xi. Moses obtains the Manna from Heaven, as food in the desert: Ex. xvi. 15.

k. Christ feeds our souls with the Living Bread from Heaven.

xii. Moses gives the Law on Mount Sinai: Ex. xx.

1. To the Jews, and for a time only.
2. Amid the terrors of thunder and lightning.

l. Our Lord gives a more perfect Law—the Sermon on the Mount: Mth. v.—vii.

1. For the whole world, and for all time.
2. Taught in all sweetness and mercy.

xiii. Moses offered the blood of victims to ratify the Old Covenant.

m. Our Lord offers His own Blood to ratify the New.

xiv. Moses did not finally lead the people into Cana: Deut. xxxiv. 14.

n. Our Lord, greater than Moses, opened Heaven to men, on the day of His Ascension.

Conclusion:

i. Moses typifies Our Lord, chiefly, as being Our *Deliverer*, our *Legislator*, and our *Intercessor*.

ii. The Just of the Old Law found their consolation in the many *types* God raised up in their midst.

iii. Let us rejoice in the *reality*, and admire the ways of Divine Providence.

99. UNITY OF GOD.

"God is one." Gal. iii. 20.

i. These words express a simple and elementary truth of Faith.
ii. Simple truths are very apt to be overlooked: for,
iii. How few people care to dwell on such a sublime subject as the nature of God.
iv. Take then to-day the opportunity of considering the

Unity of God:

I. A REVEALED TRUTH: for God has manifested Himself in

i. A *Primitive* Revelation, as the

a. One Creator of all things: Gen. i.: ii. 19.

b. One Lawgiver, who gave all to Adam except one fruit.

"Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat." Gen. ii. 17.

c. One Judge, who will punish disobedience.

"In what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die." *Ibid.*

ii. A *Revelation to Moses* and the prophets, as one God.

"Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me." Ex. xx. 3.
"There is no other god besides Me." Deut. xxxii. 39.

iii. A *Christian Revelation.*

"That they may know Thee, the only true God." Jn. xvii. 3.
"There is no God but One." 1 Cor. viii. 4.

II. A TRUTH ATTAINABLE BY REASON:

i. It is repugnant to Reason to hold the existence of a plurality of absolute beings:

a. The existence of one such excludes the very idea of a second.*

b. A being is supreme only in so far as others depend on him.

c. That being alone is infinitely perfect who has all perfections.

If more than one God existed, some of his perfections must be limited.

d. Since God is infinitely perfect, He must be supreme Lord.
Two or more cannot be supreme, because limited by each other.

ii. Unity of order in Nature testifies to one Author of Creation.
a. Everything in the moral and physical worlds points to unity of thought, will and execution.
b. Everywhere we find the same laws, same causes, same results.
c. All which presupposes one supreme Legislator, and one Providence governing all things.

iii. The voice of Conscience points to one Lawgiver.
The principles of the Moral Law are everywhere the same.

III. A TRUTH CONSENTED TO BY ALL MEN:

i. Despite their polytheism, even the Pagans have preserved the idea more or less distinct of the unity of God; for,

ii. Their polytheism was not one of equality, but of subordination; and,

iii. They recognized among their gods *one* as supreme.

iv. Thus do they agree herein with the primitive Revelation of Jews and Christians.

IV. ONE OF THE FOUR GREAT TRUTHS:
To be believed by every Christian: hence,

i. The need of knowing and studying it; and,

ii. The great Charity of teaching it to others.

iii. The zeal of missionaries, going among the heathen.

Lessons:

i. As God is one, so is His Church, His authoritative manifestation on earth.

ii. Thank God for calling you to this Church, whose unity proclaims its divine origin.

iii. Endeavour always to promote unity of mind and heart among men.

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* Manicheism held two infinite necessary principles—of good, and of evil. Into this heresy of the fifth c. the great S. Augustine fell: pride and sensuality were the causes of such a fall, as he himself admits. The instructions of S. Ambrose, at Milan, were the first beginning of his conversion from error.—*His Life: Aug. 28.*

100. THE PROMISE OF A REDEEMER.

"God gave it to Abraham by promise." Gal. iii. 18.

i. Fallen man could not make his peace with God.
   a. A finite being could not repair an infinite evil.
   b. He consequently must have been lost for eternity.
ii. But God in mercy promised a Redeemer, first to Adam (Gen. iii.), then to Abraham (Gen. xxii.).

Abraham and the Promise:

i. After the deluge, men multiplied, and again fell from God.
   By every form of sin: Wisd. xii. 4: Rom. i. 23.
ii. Man was now left for ages in his sad plight:
   a. To teach him how great is the corruption of hearts after the Fall.
   b. To cure his pride, showing him what he is capable of, left to himself.
   c. To convince him of the need of a Redeemer.
iii. Yet God did not abandon him altogether.
   He chose a special people, whom He preserved from the general corruption.
iv. As a reward of his fidelity, Abraham became the father of this people.
   "I will multiply thee exceedingly." Gen. xvii. 2.
   "I will multiply thy seed as the stars of Heaven." Gen. xxii. 17.
v. The descendants of Abraham
   a. Multiplied and grew to be a great people.
   b. Received the Law through Moses to guide them: Ex. xx.
      "After four hundred and thirty years" from the promise.
   c. Settled in Cana, "flowing with milk and honey": Jos. v. 6.
   d. Had the promise renewed five times again. (No. 11.)
   e. Had prophets sent to them, to instruct and rebuke.
   f. Received many miraculous favours from God.

vi. Known in history, as
  a. The *Israelites*, from the name of one of their patriarchs.
  b. The *Jews*, from Juda, of which tribe the Redeemer was to come.
  c. The *People of God*, from the special protection He gave them.
vii. Even they were not always faithful, but often rebelled against God.
  Who punished them, but on repentance, pardoned again.
viii. Their religion consisted chiefly in sacrifices of animals, etc.
  Types of the future sacrifice of the Redeemer, which gave them their efficacy.
ix. The rest of nations were called *Gentiles:*
  a. Who knew not God, nor the things of God.
  b. Were guilty of idolatry, and of every abomination before Him: Rom. i.

The Israelites and Revelation:

i. God made known some truths to His People: *e.g.*
  a. The knowledge of Himself and His Law.
  b. The cause of their miseries—Sin.
  c. The only remedy for them—a Redeemer.
  d. The object of their Creation—Salvation.
  e. The means to this end—Faith and Obedience.
ii. Even these simple truths were often perverted and misinterpreted.
iii. God at last gave His full revelation to man, through Jesus Christ, the long-promised Redeemer.
iv. The chief offices of this Saviour were:
  a. To redeem men from sin and Satan.
  b. To enlighten their minds with the truths of eternity.
v. To this end, God chose a new people—His Church.
  a. It likewise multiplied over the face of the earth.
  b. It receives ministers and miraculous favours.
  c. Of this Church, we are members, who must be ever grateful for, and profit by, the mercies here bestowed.
  d. Pray God that this people may increase, through worthy converts being added to the Church.

101. THE SPIRITUAL COMBAT.

"The flesh lusteth against the spirit." Gal. v. 17.

i. From the day of the Fall, man's life is a warfare: Job vii. 1.
   a. The spirit and the flesh ever opposing each other.
   b. The soul tending upwards, the body dragging downwards.
ii. Yet Heaven is a prize, worth the battle of a lifetime.
iii. Consider two points of this unending struggle.

Our Enemies:

i. S. Paul says they are manifest and well-known: The works of the flesh, as opposed to those of the spirit.
ii. He enumerates some, which may be classed under
   a. Self-indulgence: e.g. uncleanness, drunkenness.
   b. Impiety: e.g. idolatry, witchcrafts.
   c. Irascible appetite: e.g. enmities, quarrels.
iii. They will assault us, till we draw our last breath:
   a. In all times and places.
   b. The more perhaps, the more we love God.
   c. Taking advantage of creatures, to deceive us.
   d. Varying, according to characters and dispositions.
iv. In permitting this, God has ends in view:
   a. Trials make us more active and careful.
   b. Temptation tends to strengthen our virtue. As storms strengthen the oak.
   c. Dangers teach us our weakness and our need of God.
   d. Otherwise, we may become tepid and slothful. Seamen sleep in the calm, but watch in the tempest.
v. Hence be not discouraged, but accept the helps offered, viz.

Our Helps:

i. The Holy Ghost, who
   a. In Baptism,
      1. Gives us sanctifying grace.
      2. Infuses the moral virtues.
   b. In Confirmation,
      1. Renews and strengthens them for greater trials.
      2. Gives also His twelve fruits. (Epistle.)

ii. Prayer to God
   a. Who usually gives help only in answer to petitions.
      Hence daily devotions, ejaculations.
   b. Who will not suffer us to have too great trials: 1 Cor. x. 13.

iii. Penance and Holy Eucharist, sources of strength.

iv. Avoidance of dangerous occasions: Ecclus. iii. 27.
   a. God will not help those who help not themselves.
   b. At least making dangers remote, by due precautions.

v. Lively Faith
   a. In the great truths of salvation.
   b. In the happiness and misery of eternity.
   c. Leading us to renounce the transitory things of earth.

vi. Such helps had the Saints, in fighting the same enemies.

In Conclusion: we must know that

i. If the Devil cannot lead us into sin,
   a. He will try to discourage us; or,
   b. Will cloud the soul with trouble and anxiety; or,
   c. Will endeavour to make us scrupulous.

ii. These are dangerous delusions, sometimes fatal:
   a. Preventing us making progress.
   b. Perhaps forcing us to give up religion altogether.

iii. We must use the Helps given us, as the Saints have done before us.

102. RELIGIOUS SECTS.

"Dissensions, sects." Gal. v. 20.

i. S. Paul to-day condemns disputes in religion, heresies.
ii. There are nearly 300 religious denominations in England alone!
iii. Of these the Catholic Church differs from all, in one essential point:
  a. Their rule of faith is: the Bible and private interpretation.
  b. Hers, the Bible interpreted by an infallible guide.

Arguments against the Protestant theory:

i. Christ never wrote a line for His Church—a strange thing, if He meant men's religion to depend on personal interpretations of documents.
ii. Christ commanded His Apostles to *teach* and preach: Mth. xxviii. 19.
  But never once to commit anything to writing.
iii. Christ never said
  a. "If a man *read not the Scriptures*": but, "If he will not *hear the Church*." Mth. xviii. 17.
  b. "Whoso *follows the Scriptures*, follows Me": but "He that *heareth you*, heareth Me." Lke. x. 16.
  c. And: "Faith cometh by *hearing*." Rom. x. 17.: not, by *reading*.
iv. Few Apostles only ever wrote anything in the Bible: And then, only through circumstances, and to parts of the Church.
v. The very form of the Bible shows it is not a text-book of doctrine.
  It contains no methodical statement of teaching in regular sequence.
vi. The entire Bible was not complete for generations: S. John's Gospel and Apocalypse written about A.D. 96.
vii. Hundreds of years passed, before its scattered parts were brought together.
  Thus no one could see them all, unless greatly travelled.

viii. Even when brought together in one volume, few could obtain it.
a. Printing and paper were not yet invented.
b. The only thing to do would be to copy it out (in, say, 5 years), and at immense cost.
Religion, so long dependent on such means, is not that of Christ.
ix. For many ages, excepting the Clergy, not 1 in 500 could read.
The rest could, then, have no rule of faith, no path of salvation.
x. Christ prayed for unity of faith among His disciples:
a. The "Bible only" is cause of "dissensions and sects;" for
b. Honest and able men draw opposite conclusions from it.
What then of the less honest and less able!

Further Difficulties:

i. The history of the Bible:
a. It was written by different men, and under different circumstances.
b. Not before the 4th c. did the Church declare the Canon of Scripture.
c. In this, the Church was either fallible, or not:
1. If *fallible*, she might err, and we are not sure of the Bible.
2. If *infallible*, we must listen, accept and obey.
ii. The Interpretation of the Bible:
a. However holy, it is useless, if interpreted against its real meaning.
Yet this is inevitable, unless there be an infallible interpreter: for,
b. It is not easy to understand it.
The Queen's eunuch: Acts viii. 31.
S. Peter's declaration: 2 Pet. iii. 16.

Conclusion:

i. There can be but one true Church, one fold: Jn. x. 16.
ii. If Unity be essential, what is the bond of union?
The infallible Church, maintaining unity among its members.
iii. Therefore does the Apostle condemn all "dissensions."

103. BEARING ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS.

"Bear ye one another's burdens." **Gal. vi. 2.**

i. Such the advice of S. Paul, a very apostle of charity.
ii. If only followed by men, how different the world would be!
iii. See how we can put it into practice.

Bearing others' burdens: *e.g.*

i. Differences of character;
  a. Often a source of uncharitableness and unhappiness.
  b. Examples:
    1. The phlegmatic with the choleric.
    2. The gentle with the impatient.
    3. The active with the slothful.
  c. In the same house, same office, etc.
  d. In all, let each one bear with the other.
ii. Various troubles:
  a. Such as sickness, cares, poverty, etc.
  b. They may affect ourselves, also. Yet,
  c. Bear one another's burdens: *e.g.* by
    1. Sympathy in trials.*
    2. Encouragement in difficulty.
    3. Assistance in poverty.
iii. Especially, temptation and sin:
  a. Sin, *the* great burden of all.
    1. Oppressing a neighbour, and exposing him to fall again.
    2. Like a beast, falling under his load.
  b. Sin of apostasy here specially implied. Yet,
  c. Any sin, of which we know a neighbour guilty.

d. Bear one another's burden: *i.e.*
1. Instruct him in the spirit of meekness.
2. Remind him charitably of his fault:
Avoiding all painful rebuke.
3. Urge him to sorrow and repentance.

e. Taking it, as it were, on your own shoulders, that he may rise.
As you relieve a fallen animal, that he may get up.

f. Bear also such burdens, especially by
1. Prayer for his conversion.
2. Acts of penance, by way of expiation.
As Christ did in our regard: Is. liii. 4.

iv. If we thus bear with others, we shall find others bear with us.

A sign of perfection.

i. Sympathy and forbearance, proofs of strong robust virtue.

"So you shall fulfil the law of Christ." Gal. vi. 2.

ii. Contempt and condemnation of neighbours, usually a sign of some hidden sin.

iii. Charity, "the Queen of virtues," is not puffed up, thinketh no evil, endureth all things: 1 Cor. xiii.

Lessons:

i. Show this Christian charity to a neighbour, under his burden, spiritual or temporal.

ii. Put kindly interpretations on his acts, or intentions, and allow for circumstances.

iii. Thus shall we tend to lighten his burden. While,

iv. Whoso freely carps at another's faults will often be found guilty of the same!

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* Next to love, sympathy is the divinest passion of the human heart. He who cannot weep for his neighbour's trouble, cannot console him for it.

104. SUPPORT OF PASTORS.

"Let him that is instructed . . . communicate . . . in all good things." Gal. vi. 6.

i. Support of the Clergy has ever been considered a duty of the Faithful.
ii. S. Paul here lays down the precept.
iii. This principle is based on three grounds: viz.

I. Justice:

i. To attend to the ministry, the priest does not engage in trade.
Yet he must live, as other men must.
ii. The Faithful receive spiritual blessings, through his ministrations.
The Holy Sacrifice: the Sacraments: Instructions.
iii. The Priest sacrifices time, health and strength, and even life for his people.
iv. It is therefore simple justice that they support their Pastor.

"Who feedeth the flock, and eateth not the milk of the flock." 1 Cor. ix. 7.

v. To support their own Pastor, whatever they may do for others elsewhere.

II. The Command of God:

i. Seen in Holy Writ: in word and example:

"Give them their portion of the first-fruits." Ecclus. vii. 34.
"The workman is worthy of his meat." Mth. x. 10.
"They that serve the altar partake with the altar." 1 Cor ix. 13.
"They who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel." 1 Cor. ix. 14.

Our Lord accepted the necessaries of life from the people.
He eat with Matthew the Publican: Mth. ix. 10.
He accepted the hospitality of Martha and Mary: Lke. x. 38.

ii. In the Old Law, cities and lands were set apart for the maintenance of the Levites: Jos. xxi. 2.
iii. The Levites were entitled to first-fruits and tithes: Numb. xviii.: Deut. xviii.

iv. In the New Law, the same existed in the early ages Lands, etc., were given for the support of the Clergy.
v. In England, their confiscation in the 16th c. renewed the need of other means of support.*

III. **The Command of the Church:**

i. We are bound to support our parents in their need, 4th Comdt. of God.
ii. In like manner, our spiritual fathers, the Clergy.
iii. Hence the fifth command of the Church does but develop the fourth command of the Decalogue.
iv. Neglect of this duty is thus really a sin crying vengeance: Jas. v. 4.

"The labourer is worthy of his hire." Lke. x. 7.

v. Command too often neglected nowadays.
Through the spirit of independence, contempt, or indifference. Hence:

Resolution to fulfil henceforth this duty: *e.g.* by

i. Paying door-pence or seat-rents:
Not as an alms, but as just payment for fair value.
ii. Contributing to the Offertory, according to one's means.
iii. Giving
a. *Honoraria* for Masses.
b. Stole-fees, *e.g.* at Baptisms, Marriages, etc.
iv. Joining the Altar Society.
v. Taking a share in the mission burdens.
vi. Such liberality to His ministers is pleasing to God.
The widow of Sarephta: 3 Kgs. xvii.
The widow's mite: Mrk. xii. 43.
vii. Generosity of the kind never impoverishes; it brings a blessing with it.

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* Our Catholic forefathers were full of a generous zeal to secure by endowments the services of a permanent priesthood and to provide for the competent and splendid celebration of the divine worship. A considerable part of the provision thus made was confiscated and squandered during the Reformation; what remained was transferred to the Anglican body, and is still enjoyed by them.—*Cath. Dict.*

105. GOD, THE CREATOR OF ALL.

"Of whom all paternity . . . is named." Eph. iii. 15.

i. Words denoting God as sole author and creator of all things.

ii. They refute the Gnostics, who held there were many principles of existence.

God created all things:

i. Brought all things forth from nothing, by His only word.

"He spoke and they were made: He commanded and they were created." Ps. cxlviii. 5.
"All things were made by Him." Jn. i. 3.

ii. Before Creation, God alone existed.

a. From all eternity: overpowering thought!

b. Infinitely happy in Himself and His divine Perfections.

c. Having no need whatever of creatures.

iii. God created, for His own honour and glory: *i.e.*

a. To be known and praised by His creatures.

b. This is only His due, and is sought in a due manner.

"I have created him for My glory." Is. xliii. 7.
"The Lord hath made all things for Himself." Prov. xvi. 4.

iv. God also preserves His creation, His Providence watching over it.

"He upholdeth all things by the word of His power.' Heb. i. 3.
"By Him all things consist." Col. i. 17.

v. Examples of God's power and dominion over all things:

a. Of many kinds: *e.g.*

Changing the rivers into blood: Ex. vii. 20.
Dividing the water of the sea: Ex. xiv. 21.
Giving water from the rock: Ex. xvii. 6.
Protection amid the flames: Dan. iii.
Raising the dead to life: Mth. ix. 25 Lke. vii. 15.

b. Truly God alone is mighty, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." 1 Tim. vi. 15.

c. This infinite power, a comfort to the Saints, as it should be to us.

vi. God could destroy the universe.

a. All creatures have their being from God.

b. He is thus sole master, and there is none to resist Him.

c. He could therefore destroy, as He can create.

vii. Besides the visible world, God also created the Angels.

a. Pure spirits with intelligence and free-will.

b. Created in the state of grace, in Heaven.

c. In a hierarchy of order—the nine Choirs.

d. Large numbers fell from grace, and are lost for ever.

e. Of those that remained faithful, some given as guardians to men.

viii. Last of all, God created Man.

a. To His own image and likeness: Gen. i. 27.

b. The *Body*, from the slime of the earth: Gen. ii. 7.

c. The *Soul*, a spiritual substance, direct from His hands.

d. In the state of justice in Eden.

e. This happiness lost by Adam's sin.

f. Redemption of man by Jesus Christ.

g. Destined, and now able again, to live for ever with God.

Lessons:

i. Reverential *Fear* of God almighty.

"Who can destroy both soul and body into Hell." Mth. v. 28.

ii. Unbounded *Trust* in His power.

iii. *Gratitude* for our creation, the ground of all God's benefits.*

* A beautiful tradition among the Jews says that when God had created the world, He asked the Angels what they thought of His work; and one replied that it was so vast and perfect, that only one thing seemed wanting—a clear, mighty and harmonious voice which should incessantly fill all quarters of the world, to offer thanksgiving to its Maker for His blessings. So should our gratitude be ever living and fresh in the heart.—*Faber.*

106. LENGTH, ETC. OF GOD'S LOVE.

"The breadth and length and height and depth." Eph. iii. 18.

i. The Apostle prays that we may have a full sense of the infinite goodness of God, in these its four dimensions.
ii. Consider it to-day, under these four heads.

I. **Length of God's love**: its eternal duration.
  i. What an honour, had God loved us from the day of our birth only!
  ii. Still greater honour, if from the beginning of time! But,
  iii. God's love of us has been eternal:
    a. His knowledge and love are as essential as Himself.
    b. What He loves in time, He has loved from eternity.
    c. From all eternity He decreed our existence, and all the effects of His love, we have ever experienced.
  iv. What an amazing idea this gives of God's love—its eternal duration.

"I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Jer. xxxi. 3.

II. **Breadth of God's love**: the extent of its effects in the *natural* order: *e.g.*
  i. Giving us existence, the foundation for every good.
    a. In preference to thousands of possible beings.
    b. Without any merit on our part.
    c. Even with reasons against it—our sins foreseen: Ecclus. xxxix. 24.
  ii. Preserving our existence:
    a. Giving us all we need, for soul and body.
    b. In spite of our continued sin and ingratitude.
    c. Offering time and opportunity for repentance.
  iii. The universe for our benefit and welfare:
    a. Sun, moon, etc.: the elements: goods of the world.

b. Inequality of distribution, through some beneficent design.
c. Command laid upon all to love us.
iv. Spiritual protectors to each one, the Guardian Angels.
v. What ample grounds for admiration and gratitude—the breadth of God's love!

III. **Height of God's love:** the excellence of His *supernatural* gifts.
i. These bestow on us a new spiritual dignity.
a. Making us friends and children of God.
b. Making us "partakers of the divine nature." 2 Pet. i. 4.
ii. They give us a title to God's Kingdom of glory hereafter.
Joys without compare, and eternal!
iii. Yet not all men reach that Kingdom. But,
a. To us, what graces are given, above many!
b. Why to us, and not to the Pagans?
c. What our doom, if the faith were not ours!
iv. How great, again, our obligations to God.
How many thousands might have made better use of His gifts than we!

IV. **Depth of God's love:** His humiliations to secure us grace.
i. The strongest love, when despised, oft turns to hate.
a. Where is love equal to God's (*supra*)?
b. How often repaid by sin!
ii. Might we not expect instant justice, as with the Angels?
Yet God submits to outrage, and waits to have mercy: Is. xxx. 18.
iii. His divine Son degrades Himself for our redemption.
Poverty and labour, suffering and death!
iv. His solicitude to continue and extend His graces.
Especially in the lowly form of Holy Eucharist.
v. Could God's love go lower and deeper than it did!

Consider thus the length and breadth, the height and depth of the Divine love.

"O the depth of the riches of the wisdom of God." Rom. xi. 33.
The gratitude of Tobias an example to us: Tob. xii.

107. EXCLUSIVE SALVATION.

"One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism." Eph. iv. 5.

i. Nothing so excites hostility against the Church as her doctrine of exclusive salvation.
ii. She is accused of intolerance in holding it.
iii. Consider then this doctrine, and its exact meaning.

True:

i. To be saved, we must
  a. *Believe* all that Christ taught; and
  b. *Do* all that He commanded.
ii. Only in the Catholic Church, is the full teaching of Christ to be found.
  The Sects mutilate, or misinterpret, His doctrines.
iii. Hence outside this Church, there is no salvation
  As outside the ark, none were saved.
iv. Thus *Indifferentism* stands condemned, which holds
  a. All religions are equally good; and
  b. It matters not which one we follow.
v. "Exclusive Salvation" may sound harsh and hard.
  a. Yet, if it be true, it must be accepted.*
  b. If $2+2=4$, all other totals must be excluded.

Necessary:

i. The Catholic Church, professing to be the Church of God, would stultify herself, if she did not make this claim.
ii. Such claim is often called intolerance. Yet,
  a. Intolerance is the general law of all that is stable: *e.g.*
    Gravitation is intolerant: build a wall out of plumb, and it falls.
  b. So is it with Truth:
    1. Error destroys the very idea of truth.
    2. Therefore is truth intolerant of error.
  c. In this sense only, is the Church intolerant.
iii. But her intolerance does not imply persecution.
  a. Individuals have sometimes resorted to it: but,
  b. The Church never approves, always condemns it.

Reasonable:

i. Only in the Catholic Church is the Sacrifice of Redemption offered.
Only there can its saving graces be obtained.
ii. They alone receive the salary that work in the vineyard of the Lord.
iii. A member separated from the body cannot have life.
iv. Reason alone tells us that God can mark out the path by which He wills men to reach salvation.
This He has done in establishing His Church.
v. Hence, outside this, there is no salvation.

Meaning:

i. Those only who are sacramentally baptized are visibly members of the Church: but,
ii. Baptism of Blood, or of Desire, makes us members before God.
Such, by innocent life, or by repentance, may be saved.
iii. Unless we are thus in some way members of the Church, we can never see God.
iv. All who *are* in the Church are not necessarily saved.
a. In the ark were animals clean and unclean, the latter rejected.
b. So, even in the true Church, they will be rejected who die in mortal sin.

Conclusion:

i. With this explanation, "Exclusive Salvation" is less harsh than it sounds.
a. Every doctrine needs explanation. But,
b. Whatever we may feel, we must hold to this, because it is true.
ii. Gratitude for our Baptism, and the true Faith.
iii. Prayer that they may be given to many others also.
iv. Anxiety to secure early Baptism to Infants.

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* Some truths are hard to hear. It is a hard thing, very hard, that, owing to a simple false step, a man falls over the precipice, and is dashed to pieces: very hard, but true, all the same.

108. UNITY OF FAITH.

"One Faith." Eph. iv. 5.

i. The Apostle urges his converts to union and charity.
ii. He bases his appeal on their unity of Faith.
iii. This is one of the marks of the true Church.

Unity of Faith:

i. Our Lord desired this unity of Faith among His disciples in every age and place.

"That they may be one, as we also are." Jn. xvii. 11.

ii. He did not, could not, give two faiths, two opposing doctrines.

God being one, there can be but one doctrine from Him.

iii. To secure this, Christ gave a practical and efficient principle of union:

The principle of divine Authority, found in the Catholic Church only.

iv. The Church of God is held together by an infallible Head.

a. Bishops, Priests and Laity are all dependent on the Pope.

b. He is the Vicar of Christ on earth, in Faith and Morals.

c. If we obey His authority, we retain the unity of Faith.

d. If we proudly resist it, we are cast out of the Church, as rebels.

v. This Unity of Faith implies, that

a. All members of the Church believe everywhere the same truths.

b. Every age has received and transmitted the same deposit of faith.

c. All accept the same interpretation of Scripture and Tradition.

d. All submit to the same rule of Morals, flowing from that teaching.

e. Catholics accept all definitions that the Church has, or may, put forth.

vi. Does not require *explicit* belief in every doctrine.
  a. This is impossible for mankind at large.
  b. But in certain leading dogmas only.
vii. Requires *implicit* belief in them all, by all: *i.e.*
  A readiness of mind to accept whatever the Church proposes.
viii. The bond of union among Protestants is the Bible.
  But the principle of private judgment thereon is a source of disunion.

Dogma:

i. The precise enunciation of a divine truth by the Church.
ii. Defining a dogma
  a. Does not imply a new doctrine.* But,
  b. Means making the acceptance of a doctrine binding the consciences of all.
  c. Examples of recent definitions:
    The Immaculate Conception, in 1854.
    Papal Infallibility, in 1870.

Heresy:

i. Is a proposition directly opposed to Faith: *e.g.*
  Arianism, 5th c. denial of Christ's Divinity.
ii. To be a heretic is always a grave misfortune, be it formal, or even material only.
iii. Heretics do not belong to the Body of the Church, and receive not the spiritual advantages of members.
iv. If they die, wilfully separated from the Church, they are lost.

Lessons:

i. Prize and treasure the holy Faith, the great gift of God.
ii. Dogma the source of true solid devotion.
  Knowledge must precede love.
iii. While hating heresy, compassionate heretics.
iv. Let your Faith be the groundwork of true Charity.

* The circulation of the blood was not a new fact, though only discovered by Harvey in 1616. So, the divine Maternity of Mary was not a new doctrine, when formally defined A.D. 431.

109. THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE.

"I give thanks to my God always." 1 Cor. i. 4.

i. God is the source of all graces and blessings to men. Jas. i. 17.

ii. To Him therefore thanks and gratitude are due.

iii. S. Paul's words remind us all of a plain duty.

Motives for gratitude and praise.

i. The example and will of God.

a. As shown by His commanding to the Jews:

1. The Paschal Solemnity: Ex. xii. 17.
   In gratitude for their deliverance from Egypt.
2. The Feast of Tabernacles: Lev. xxiii. 34.
   For God's favours in the desert.
3. The Feast of Pentecost: Ex. xxiii. 16.
   α. In memory of the giving of the Law.
   β. In thanksgiving for the harvests.

b. As shown in numerous texts of Scripture: *e.g.*

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all He hath done for thee." Ps. cii. 2.
"Giving thanks always, for all things." Eph. v. 20.
"Watching in (prayer) in thanksgiving." Col. iv. 2.
"In all things, give thanks." 1 Thess. v. 18.
"Seven times a day, I have given praise to Thee." Ps. cxviii. 164.

ii. The example of Our Lord: *e.g.*

a. At the multiplication of the loaves: Mrk. viii. 6; Jn. vi. 11.

b. At the raising of Lazarus: Jn. xi. 41.

c. At the last supper: Mth. xxvi. 27.

iii. The example of the Church Triumphant, ever praising God: Ap. vii. 12.

iv. The Example of the Church Militant: *e.g.*

a. Daily recitation of the Divine Office.

b. The *Gloria Patri*, at the end of the psalms.

c. *Deo gratias*, in the Mass and Office.
d. The *Gloria in Excelsis.*

v. Gratitude, a means of obtaining further favours.*
vi. Therefore, let us ever praise and thank God for His mercies.

Subjects for thanksgiving and praise:

i. Blessings common to the human race.
Creation: Redemption: Providence.
ii. Personal blessings on ourselves:
a. Faith, conversion, vocation.
b. Even trials, mortifying our self-love.
c. God's patience and longsuffering.
iii. Holy men have praised God on behalf of irrational creatures.
An excellent practice of the presence of God.
iv. Even blessings given to the damned who bless not God.
v. For the Holy Eucharist, as sacrifice and sacrament.
Itself a worthy thankoffering to God, as its name implies.

Practices:

i. Have different objects each day, for which to praise God.
ii. Due thanksgiving after Confession and Communion.
Imitate not the ingratitude of the nine: Lke. xvii. 17.
iii. Gratitude for every trifling mercy, spiritual and temporal.†
Even a simple *Deo gratias* from the heart.
iv. Look on God as a loving father, then praise and thanksgiving will become an easy practice.

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* The gifts of grace cannot flow in us, because we are ungrateful to the Giver. *Imitation.*—Speak to God in thanksgiving, and you will get graces more and more abundantly.—*S. Bernard.*

† Be grateful for the least, and thou shalt be worthy to receive greater things.—*Imitation.*

110. PERSEVERANCE.

"Who will confirm you unto the end." 1 Cor. i. 8.

i. S. Paul hopes God will preserve his converts in grace to the end.
ii. Perseverance is God's gift, and a most precious one.
iii. A serious matter for all of us, and worthy of careful thought.

Perseverance:

i. Our continuance in virtue and God's love, until death.
ii. Absolutely necessary, if we wish for salvation.

"He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved." Mth. x. 22.

"Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Ap. ii. 10.

iii. It little avails to begin well, if afterwards we renounce God.*
iv. A special gift from God alone, which we cannot merit, but may confidently hope for, if we take the means to it: *e.g.*

Means to Perseverance: †

i. Daily fervent prayer: for,
   a. Perseverance is essentially God's gift.
   b. God usually gives grace, only in answer to prayer.
   c. S. Philip urged daily prayer to this end.
ii. Renewal of good intention:
   a. Sweetness of devotion usually accompanies beginnings of conversion.
   b. Later on, it often disappears. Hence again,
   c. S. Philip recommended renewals of fervour.
iii. Not to undertake too many good works.
   a. Consider prudently what you can do.
   b. Having undertaken it, don't give it up.
iv. True devotion to the Blessed Virgin.
   a. Even though in small matters only.

Quisquid minimum, dummodo sit constans. S. John Berchmans.

b. Such as Rosary, Litany, Hail Mary, etc. But,
c. Imitation of her virtues, the best devotion.
d. Teach children, while young, to love the Mother of God.
e. The Saints declare this a pledge of salvation.

v. Devotion to S. Joseph, patron of a happy death.
vi. Charity to the living and the dead.
a. Works of mercy gain many intercessors; and,
b. The prayer of many cannot fail to be heard.
vii. Holy Fear of God: which will produce
a. Deep humility, and distrust of self.
b. Respect for God and His Law.
c. Hatred and horror of sin; and thus,
d. Final perseverance.
viii. Correspondence with individual graces, which constitute the links of the chain of Perseverance.

Lessons:

i. Our life is like the pursuit of agriculture.
a. Its object must be to reap the harvest of eternal glory.
1. How perseveringly the farmer toils on, in spite of difficulties.
2. So must the Christian struggle, despite opposition.
b. Hope of good harvests lightens the farmer's labour.
c. Hope of eternal reward encourages the Christian to battle manfully.
ii. Take the means to perseverance here suggested, and the crown *must* be yours.

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* They that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize. So, all virtues tend to the possession of God's eternal Kingdom; for instance, contempt of the world, love of poverty, obedience, patience, and the rest; but perseverance alone receives the crown.

† Like prudent and experienced travellers, let us make such provision for our journey through the desert of this world, as will prevent us from fainting on the way, and take such precautions, as will secure us from falling into the hands of our enemies.—*Perry.*

111. LYING.

"Putting away lying, speak ye the truth." Eph. iv. 25.

i. This lesson not sufficiently impressed on the minds of many.

ii. Examine therefore the subject, in the presence of the God of truth.

The nature of lies, and their guilt.

Lies:

i. Words or signs against the truth, to deceive a neighbour.

To say an untruth, believing it true, is not a lie, but an error.

ii. The devil told the first lie in the Garden of Eden: Gen. iii. 4.

Hence called the "father of lies:" Jn. viii. 44.

iii. Kinds of lies:

a. Jocose: spoken to please, and hurting no one.

b. Officious: hurting no one, but intended to be of service.

Sarah, saying she did not laugh: Gen. xviii. 15.

The Egyptian midwives to Pharao: Ex. i. 19.

c. Malicious: injurious to God and man.

The devil, speaking to Eve: Gen. iii. 4.

The woman before Solomon: 3 Kgs. iii. 20.

S. Peter's denial of Our Lord: Mth. xxv. 72.

The Scribes, at the Resurrection: Mth. xxviii.

iv. Are obstacles to the current of free communication and progress among men.

Guilt of lying seen thus:

i. A lie is a direct attack on God, who is Truth itself.

ii. God gave us speech, to make our thoughts known to others.

Lying goes directly against this end.

iii. Lying does injury to our neighbour, who has a right that we should not deceive him.*

iv. Lies bring disgrace on him who utters them.

"A lie is a foul blot in a man." Ecclus. xx. 26.

a. It is a reproach to be, and to be called, a liar.
b. A lie implies cowardice, meanness, etc.: and,
c. A man must have regard for his reputation. For,

"A good name is better than great riches." Prov. xxii 1.

v. Lying is strongly reprobated in Holy Scripture:

"Thou shalt fly lying." Ex. xxiii. 7.
"Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." Prov. xii. 22.
"Thou will destroy all that speak a lie." Ps. v. 7.
"The mouth that belieth killeth the soul." Wisd. i. 11.
"Lie not one to another." Col. iii. 9.

vi. Thus a lie is never lawful, no matter for what end.† We may not do evil that good may come. Rom. iii. 8.

vii. The degree of guilt will vary according to the circumstances of the case: (*e.g.* injustice, scandal, perjury, sacrilege).

Lessons:

i. Detestation of this vice of lying, and circumspection to avoid it.
ii. Teach children, so prone to lies, the duty of strict truthfulness.
iii. Avoid that specially hateful form of lie—calumny.
iv. Reparation is due for the evils that flow from lying.
v. Try to raise the degraded tone of the world, by rigid integrity and candour.

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* S. Andrew Avellino, in pleading a cause, allowed a lie to escape him, though of no great weight. On reading in Scripture that *the mouth that lieth killeth the soul*, he was so struck with remorse, that he resolved at once to renounce his career in the law; he gave himself up to a penitential life, and to the spiritual care of souls.—*His Life:* Nov. 10.

† God, who is truth itself, can never approve any kind of lying; nor can anything be more destructive of civil society and commerce, than that doctrine which allows it by principle. It would be more eligible to live among dumb persons, than in a nation of liars.—*Butler.*

112. SOCIALISM.

"Let him now steal no more." Eph. iv. 28.

Seventh Commandment:

i. The only true basis of right in property, right divine.
   a. Whatever a man lawfully has, he has from God.
   b. He may think to have it through talent or industry.
   c. Yet God gives the talent, and blesses the effort.

ii. Hence the hatefulness of theft before God, as being
   a. A rebellion against His Providence.
   b. An effort to overturn the order by Him established.

iii. This right in property implies the duty of respecting it: Ex. xx. 15.

iv. Communism holds that
   a. There is no God but Nature.
   b. The evils of the day arise from social inequalities.
   c. Nature never intended
      1. Some to be masters, rich and idle; and,
      2. Others to be servants, poor and slaves.
   d. Ownership is the most fatal of errors. Hence,
   e. Community of goods must be established, which
      1. Is opposed to reason and nature.
      2. Means theft and pillage.
      Hence its condemnation.

v. Perfect Communism can only exist in Religion, where
   a. Members voluntarily renounce their possessions,
   b. Celibacy exists, and no family wants need providing for.

Socialism is Communism under state control: *e.g.*

i. All men are equal and deserve equal treatment.
   a. True in the abstract: as to Creator, Law, End.
   b. Hence all must be treated as men, and have the necessaries of life.
   But, in the concrete, men do vary, so also their rights and duties:
   Especially man and woman.

ii. The Community is absolutely supreme:
   a. All must share in production for the common good.

b. Each one must seek the good of the community first.

c. This a pagan idea of the State,

1. Excluding personal rights and possessions.
2. Denying the high idea of man's end.

iii. Yet gradations of social rank must exist: *e.g.*

a. Ignorant persons exist, hence also teachers, with different rights.

b. Yet Socialism would make all men fit for all work.

Which is absurd; though a logical conclusion.

iv. The equality of Socialism is unnatural and cannot last.

a. Remember the differences in men—mental, moral, physical.

b. These result in differences of honour, influence, wealth, etc.

c. Violence alone can effect equality, and only for a time.

v. Socialism opposes the rights of property: Yet,

a. Christ enforces the 10th commandment: Mth. v. 17.

b. He only *counsels* the young man to sell: Mth. xix. 21.

c. Ananias might have kept his land: Acts v. 4.

d. The followers of Christ possessed: (Martha, Philemon).

e. The Church has ever acknowledged such right.

f. Christianity forbids revolution.

But Socialism needs it, and officially proclaims it.

Lessons for Catholics, nowadays especially:

i. See the evils of Socialism, and its impossibility.

ii. Beware of it, under its plausible pretexts.

iii. Recognize fully the rights of property, under the 7th commandment.

iv. Obedience to God's Law will render inequalities bearable.

v. If only the world would do this, it would be spared much trouble and misery.

113. TIME.

"Redeeming the time." Eph. v. 16

i. After grace, Time is the most precious gift of God. Yet how much do we waste of it!
ii. See motives and means of spending it well.

Motives for good use of Time:

i. Its brevity:

"It is a vapour which appeareth for a little while." Jas. iv. 15.

a. Its course is like the lightning-flash, or the raging torrent.
b. Only the present is ours, and that of short duration.*
c. Once gone, it is irrevocable.

ii. Its value:

a. Of greater worth than all riches: for,
1. In time, we can purchase an eternity of happiness. And,
2. Each moment of time may increase that happiness.

b. Ask souls already in eternity the value of time.
1. *In Hell:*
α. They would give worlds for half an hour to repent in!
β. One great torment in Hell — the thought of time lost.
Ask Dives the value of it: Lke. xvi.
2. *In Purgatory:*
Gladly would they suffer a thousand deaths to be able now to atone for sin.
3. *In Heaven:*
α. What would they give for one hour, wherein to increase their merit!
β. If they could sorrow, it would be over the loss of precious time.

iii. Reparation for time lost in the past:
"Redeeming the time."
a. In eternity, no work can be done: Jn. ix. 4.
b. If we have neglected the past, we can atone in the present.
Consider the void, the guilt of many years.
c. Numbers have gone into the deserts, to atone for the past:
Remembering the words: "My sin is always before me." Ps. l. 5.
iv. The great account to be rendered for the use of time.
v. Idleness the mother of every vice: Ecclus. xxxiii. 29.

Means to employ Time well:

i. High appreciation of its value.
Without this, we shall not spend it profitably.
ii. Exact daily work:
a. Definite occupation, a great guard against waste.
b. Regularity and method in work.†
"Let all things be done according to order." 1 Cor. xiv. 40.
iii. Punctuality: "Procrastination is the thief of time."
iv. See the examples of the Saints: *e.g.*
S. Alphonsus vowed never to waste a moment! Aug. 2.
S. Bede *semper legit, semper scripsit*, etc.: May 27.
v. Good intention in all:
a. Morning offering, sanctifying the whole day.
b. Principle gounded on Our Lord's promise: Mth. x. 41.
c. Turning the simplest action into gold for eternity.

Lessons:

i. Often reflect on these two texts of Scripture:
a. "What dost thou here, Elias?" 3 Kgs. xix. 9.
b. "I must be about My Father's business." Lke. ii. 49.
ii. Resolve on a more conscientious use of time henceforth.

* As each day passes, we change, we die, and yet we think ourselves immortal.—*S. Jerome.*

† Make the most of time, it flies away so fast; yet method will teach you to win time.—*Goëthe.*

114. DRUNKENNESS.

"Be not drunk with wine." Eph. v. 18.

i. These words warn us against a fearful evil.
ii. Take occasion to reflect on the vice of drunkenness.
iii. Many are guilty of excess, without going to extremes. Let these also pay heed to the instruction.

Drunkenness:

i. Excess in drink, even to the loss of the use of reason.
ii. Mortal sin of its nature.

"Nor drunkards shall possess the Kingdom of God." 1 Cor. vi. 10.

iii. Effects:

a. Ruin of the soul, by reason of its guilt.
b. Ruin of bodily health and strength.
c. Loss of reputation before men.
d. Injury to family and State.*

In 1898, the drink bill for the United Kingdom was £154,000,000!

e. Oftentimes insanity.

iv. One of the capital sins, as being the cause of others: *e.g.*

a. Impurity.

"Wine, wherein is luxury." Eph. v. 18.

b. Anger, quarrels and abusive language.
c. Sometimes even murder and suicide.

v. Causes:

a. Slight self-indulgence, to begin with.
b. Evil companions.
c. Frequenting of public-houses.
d. Unhappy homes, driving one to drink.
e. Treating, and being treated, in public-houses.

Motives for avoiding it:

i. Consider the effects of it (*supra*).
ii. A disgraceful and degrading vice.†
iii. A most difficult habit to cure. And

"Prevention is better than cure."

iv. It often proves hereditary!
v. It leads to final impenitence.

Means to avoid it:

i. Shun the company of drinkers: Prov. xxiii. 20.
ii. Gradually lessen the amount, if prone to drink.
iii. The pledge, total or partial.
iv. Remembrance of Christ's thirst, the gall and vinegar.
v. Prayer for grace, and frequentation of the Sacraments.
vi. The spirit of mortification and self-denial.
vii. Always eat, when taking any drink.

Lessons:

i. Avoid all secret drinking.
ii. Resist the first allurements:
Principiis obsta was said, even by the pagans.
iii. Train young people to fear all self-indulgence.
iv. Pray for the conversion of the victims of drink.

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* The ancient Greeks decreed that whosoever ruined his patrimony through drink should not be buried in the tomb of his ancestors, but should be thrown without honour on the rubbish heap.

† The Lacedemonians, to instil into their children a horror of excess in drink, simply made their slaves drunk, allowing the children to see them in that state.—*Stobeus.*

115. GOOD ANGELS.

"Principalities and Powers." Eph. vi. 12.

i. These words recall the existence of a world unseen, though real.
ii. It contains two realms: good and bad angels.
iii. Study the good angels, especially the Guardian Angels.

Good Angels:

i. Pure spirits; not made, like our souls, for union with matter.
Having great power, free-will and intelligence.
ii. Supposed to exceed the number of all men to the end of time!
"Thousands of thousands . . . ten thousand times a hundred thousand." Dan. vii. 10.
iii. In three gorgeous hierarchies: subordinate, the lower to the higher.
Each hierarchy containing three choirs of varied gifts and power.
iv. Created:
a. Probably, at the same time as the material world.
b. In the state of sanctifying grace.
c. In Heaven, but without the vision of God.
d. The Beatific Vision the reward of fidelity to Him.
v. Existence proved by numerous passages of Holy Writ.

Angel Guardians:

i. Each one, at birth, entrusted to the care of an angel.
Ps. xc. 11.
S. Frances and her Angel.*
ii. Their services to men are:
a. To have a general and constant care of them.
"To keep thee in all thy ways." Ps. xc. 11.
"When I sleep, thou sleepest not." *Hymn.*

b. To direct them to good, by their inspirations.
Agar returning to her mistress: Gen. xvi. 9.
c. To assist them in temporal need.
Agar, and the well: Gen. xxi. 19.
Elias, and the cake: 3 Kgs. xix. 6.
d. To save them from dangers:
Tobias on his journey: Tob. vi.
S. Peter's deliverance: Acts xii. 7.
e. To pray for them.
An angel prayed for Jerusalem: Zach. i. 12.
f. To assist them in death.
Lazarus carried by angels to Heaven: Lke. xvi. 22.

iii. Our duties in return:
a. *Reverence* for their presence:
1. Avoiding sin, as displeasing them: Ex. xxiii. 21.
2. Saluting them in assemblies.
As was the custom of S. Philip, on entering a room full of people.
b. *Devotion* for their charity:
1. Readiness to obey their inspirations.
2. Heeding remorse of conscience after sin.
c. *Confidence* in their power:
1. Invoking their aid in difficulty, journeys, etc.
2. Placing ourselves under their care and protection; for,
3. Power is given them, that they may shield us from evil.

Lessons:

i. Lively faith in the presence of these invisible guardians.
ii. Daily prayer to them, morning and evening, etc.
iii. Honour them in some special way, in October.

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* S. Frances of Rome enjoyed the familiar conversation of her Angel Guardian, who was often visibly present to her bodily eyes, though no one else near her could see him.—*Her Life:* Mch. 9.

116. EVIL SPIRITS.

"Spirits of wickedness in the high places." Eph. vi. 12.

i. Besides good angels, there are also bad angels.
ii. Well to think of this, because of their influence and power.

Evil Spirits:

i. Before confirming the angels in grace, God tested their fidelity.
   Perhaps by requiring them to adore the revealed Humanity of Christ.
ii. Through pride, one third refused, and fell from grace: Apoc. xii. 4.
   Supposed to equal the number of men to be saved.
iii. Punishment:
   a. Loss of grace, their wonderful natural powers remaining.
   b. Hell-fire, created for them: Mth. xxv. 41.
      1. Pain of *loss* of God, for ever.
      2. Pain of *suffering*, in their exquisite sensibilities.
   c. Immediately and without time for repentance!
iv. Their occupation on earth:
   a. Bearing their hell about with them.
   b. Tempting men, through envy of them and hatred of God.
      1. By *illusion:* false conscience, etc.
      2. By *allurement:* triple concupiscence.
      3. By *terror:* scruples, possession, tempests, etc.
         Sara, wife of Tobias: xii. 14.
         Christ, and the legion: Lke. viii.
v. We must fear them always: Yet, knowing that God and His angels are with us.

Lucifer, or the Devil, has a real existence.

i. Denied nowadays, the denial encouraged by him, ensnare souls.

ii. Clearly proved by:

a. Revelation: *e.g.*

Eve's temptation: Gen. iii. 1.
Satan, striking Job: i. 12.
Appearance to the High Priest: Zach. iii. 1.
Our Lord's temptation: Mth. iv. 1.
Our Lord often expelled him from the possessed: *e.g.* Mth. ix. 33: xvii. 17: Mrk. vii. 29.

b. The teaching of the Church, shown by

1. The exorcisms in Baptism.
2. Her prayers against the powers of darkness.

c. Experience of the saints: *e.g.*

S. Antony: Jan. 17.
S. Catherine of Siena: Apl. 30.
S. Martin: Nov. 11.
The Curé of Ars.*

d. Our own experience:

1. The Devil entices to sin: Eph. vi. 16: 1 Pet. v. 8.
2. Evil suggestions and imaginations; pride, etc.

iii. Thus the Devil really exists, and is greatly to be feared.

Lessons:

i. The Devil truly to be recognized and dreaded; yet,

ii. We must have unbounded confidence in God. Appealing to Him, when attacked by the Evil One.

iii. Take the shield of faith (consideration of the truths of faith) against "the fiery darts of the most wicked one."

* For many years the holy Curé of Ars was tormented by evil spirits and physically ill-treated; they disturbed him at night by horrible shrieks and noises; they sometimes threw him out of bed, and once they even set fire to it.—*His Life.*

117. ALL SAINTS.

"A great multitude which no man could number." Ap. vii. 9.

i. Magnificent feast for the whole Church of God.
ii. To celebrate it worthily, reflect on it to-day.

The Feast:

i. Celebrated Nov. 1st, from the 8th c. though known in the 4th.
The Pantheon.*
ii. Objects:
a. To honour all the Saints in Heaven.
1. At first, the Martyrs' feasts were honoured annually.
2. In time, it became impossible to honour each separately.
3. Still more so, the Virgins and Confessors.
b. To thank God for His mercies to the Saints.
c. To excite us to imitate their example.
d. To encourage our weakness and confound our tepidity.
e. To obtain the intercession of the Saints.
f. To repair our negligence in keeping individual feasts.
How often do we pass them by without notice!

The Saints:

i. Sanctified themselves on earth, and now stand before God's throne.
Countless multitudes of "all nations and peoples."
ii. In various degrees of bliss according to their merits.
"Then will He render to every man according to his works." Mth. xvi. 27.
iii. Yet all are content and happy amid the inequality.
iv. Three classes have a special crown (*aureola*):
a. Doctors of the Church, who, by the *Prudence* of their teaching, resisted the *Devil*, the father of lies.
"They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars." Dan. xii. 3.

b. *Martyrs*, who overcame the *World* by their *Fortitude.*
Bearing still their glorified wounds, and "palms in their hands."
c. *Virgins*, who overcame the *Flesh*, by the *temperate* use of all things.

"These follow the Lamb, whithersoever He goeth." Ap. xiv. 4.

v. Their happiness not disturbed by loss of friends in Hell! For,
Their will, in union with God's, blesses His *Justice.*
vi. Their accidental glory continues to increase:
a. Every fresh arrival adds to the general joy.
b. Their good works on earth continue fruitful to souls, and so merit increasing reward.
vii. Their joy and reward is for ever, without fear of loss or diminution.
Essential to real and complete happiness.

Lessons:

i. Confidence and hope:
a. The Saints had the same trials as we.
b. We have the same graces as they, and their example.
ii. Charity and love:
A family festival of relations now dead, one day to be ours.
ii. Devotion to the Saints as friends:
Their prayers have great power with God.
iv. Imitation of their virtues:
The best and only true way to honour them.

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* Marcus Agrippa, in the reign of Augustus, built a magnificent temple in Rome, called the Pantheon, either because all false deities were worshipped in it, or because its shape represented the heavens, "the abode of all the gods." In the 8th c. Pope Boniface IV. opened and dedicated it to the Christian worship, under the invocation of the Bl. Virgin and all the Martyrs.—*Gaume.*

118. ALL SAINTS.

"A great multitude." Apoc. vii. 9.

i. Glorious vision granted to the beloved Disciple.
ii. That same vision held before our eyes to-day.
iii. This should be to us a great encouragement. For

I. **The Glory of the Saints is ours:**

i. Ours by right and in anticipation, as theirs now in actual possession.
ii. We are made for Heaven, as the final object of our creation.
iii. The earth is but a land of exile, a place of trial.
The happiest life here is as nothing to the joy of Heaven.
iv. To-day's festival reminds us of the glory that awaits us.
A most encouraging thought to all! *Sursum corda!*
v. By the "Communion of Saints," we may anticipate this joy, and unite ourselves with theirs.

II. **The Example of the Saints is ours:**

i. To give good example, a duty incumbent on all.
"Provoke unto charity and to good works." Heb. x. 24.
ii. The Saints have done this, and have now their reward.
a. They observed the Commandments and Law of God.
These burdens are not heavier for us than for them.
b. They practised the Beatitudes of this day's Gospel: Mth. v.
These equally within our reach also.
iii. The Saints had the same trials as we, and heavier ones.
We have the same graces as they, and their example.
iv. The remembrance of this should lessen our difficulties.
As example helps an explanation.
S. Augustine encouraged himself by the example of the Saints.
S. Ignatius, by reading their lives.

v. Consoling to our weakness is the thought that some Saints were once great sinners, but they repented: *e.g.*
S. Margaret of Cortona: Feb. 22.
S. Camillus of Lellis: Jly. 14.
S. Mary Magdalen: Jly. 22.
S. Augustine: Aug. 28.
S. Thais: Oct. 8.

vi. Thus in every form, the example of the Saints is a help.
Each sex and each age has its Saints to imitate: *S. Aug.*

III. **The Intercession of the Saints is ours:**

i. They are friends of God, and powerful with Him.
ii. They are our brethren, filled with charity towards us.
iii. Their prayer in our behalf must therefore avail much: Jas. v. 16.
This intercession we should often seek: Job v. 1.
iv. Their own accidental glory also increases by every conversion: Lke. xv. 10.
v. Invoke, therefore, their aid in time of trial and temptation.

Lessons:

i. This glorious Feast inspires Hope.
a. They now in the Church Triumphant were once in the Militant.
b. We now in the Militant trust some day to join the Triumphant.

ii. What matter then, if we suffer awhile, with such reward in view!
"One glimpse of Paradise repays a life of pain." *Hymn.*

iii. Resolution to lead lives worthy of the Saints:
Through their Glory, Example and Intercession.

iv. Heaven is ours, because
a. We are made for it, and it alone.
b. Ours already, in store for us.
c. We are now determined to secure it. Thus,

v. The Reward of the Saints will also be ours.

119. THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.

"Unto the day of Christ Jesus." Phil. i. 6.

i. The "day of Christ" refers to the Judgment, particular or general.
ii. The better to prepare for that awful day, keep it in mind.
iii. To-day reflect on the Particular Judgment.

Everyone judged in death:

i. All, without exception, from Adam to the end of time.
   As everyone dies, so everyone is judged: Heb. ix. 27.
ii. Not in the bodily presence of Christ, as at the last day.
iii. But by illumination of the memory and conscience of each one.
iv. Immediately, at the very moment of death.
   On the spot where it occurs (sick-room, the street, the sea).
v. Judgment as to
   a. Our *thoughts*, good and bad:
      How many flit across the mind each day!
   b. Our *words*, good and evil:
      How many pass our lips through life.
   c. Our *actions* of every kind:
      Greater responsibility, as affecting others.
   d. Our *omissions:*
      Sometimes as grievous as sins of commission.
vi. With the Devil and our Angel present, to accuse and defend.
vii. In strictest justice: the time for mercy is past. And,
viii. As we are found then, so will our lot be for ever.
   a. As the tree fall, so does it lie: Eccles. xi. 3.
   b. The last day will not reverse, but confirm this judgment.

The sentence passed and the soul consigned to:

i. *Heaven:*
   a. If absolutely free from all sin and punishment due.

b. Few indeed found in this happy state: *e.g.*
The Holy Mother of God.
S. Joseph, her chaste Spouse.
S. John Baptist, Our Lord's Precursor.
c. Presumption in us to expect this.

ii. *Hell:*
a. If in a state of mortal sin.
b. How many die in this unhappy plight: Mth. vii. 13.
c. Despair in us, if we ever expected to go there.

iii. *Purgatory:*
a. If the soul have atonement yet to make to God's Justice.
b. The lot of the great majority of the saved.
c. We should endeavour now to lessen future suffering; and,
d. Relieve the souls already there (November).

iv. *Limbo:*
a. In the case of those dying without Baptism.
How many children's souls are there!
b. Responsibility of parents in this regard.
Yet how careless even Catholics sometimes are.

Lessons:

i. Be it our endeavour to become perfect "unto the day of Christ."
ii. The thought of the future Judgment will aid us in this: Ecclus. vii. 40.
iii. The Saints have trembled at this thought.*
iv. If we imitate them now, we shall have less to fear then.
v. No thought so steadying as that of the Judgment; for,
The seriousness of Death arises from the certainty of its following.

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* S. Arsenius, at the age of 120, after a lifetime of penance, still feared the Judgment—S. Jerome used to tremble at the very thought of it—S. Augustine avers that meditation on this truth led to his conversion.

120. LIBERALITY.

"You are all partakers of my joy." Phil. i. 7.

i. S. Paul thanks the Philippians for aid they sent to him in prison.

ii. Such Christian charity on their part, a source of joy to him.

iii. All should imitate the Philippians in their thoughtful liberality.

Liberality:

i. Virtue leading us to give, without hope of return.

ii. Much extolled in Holy Scripture: *e.g.*

"The lips of many shall bless him that is liberal." Ecclus. xxxi. 28.

"He that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days." Prov. xxviii. 16.

"Some distribute their goods and grow richer." Prov. xi. 24

"It is a more blessed thing to give than to receive." Acts xx. 35

iii. Shown by

a. Relieving the poor.

b. Supporting good works.

c. Generosity in dealing with others.

d. Confidence in God.

iv. Effects:

a. To win the confidence of others.

b. To acquire influence over them.

c. To exercise works of mercy.

v. Examples:

Abraham's hospitality: Gen. xviii.

Tobias i. 19.

The woman of Sunam: 4 Kgs. iv. 8.

Cornelius the Centurion: Acts x. 2.

S. Martin and the cloak: Nov. 11.

The Roman Pontiffs in all ages.*

vi. Means:
- *a.* To remember that death will take from us all we have.
- *b.* To consider ourselves the dispensers only of God's gifts.
- *c.* To know that what we give to others we give to God: Mth. xxv. 40.
- *d.* To look on all men as brothers and friends.
- *e.* To teach children to be generous, by
  1. Sharing all with their companions.
  2. Giving their mite to the poor, and good works.

vii. Objects:
- *a.* God, from whom we have so much received.
- *b.* Enemies: according to the word of Christ: Mth. v. 44.
- *c.* Those in need and want.

viii. Manner:
- *a.* For motive of the love of God.
- *b.* Without looking for earthly return.
- *c.* With cheerfulness and joy: 2 Cor. ix. 7.
- *d.* Without delay, and when needed.
- *e.* Without display or self-praise.

Half the beauty of a gift lies in the manner of the giving.

Lessons:

i. Endeavour to practise the lovable virtue of Liberality. Giving it the qualities that make it meritorious for Heaven.

ii. Most important to inculcate its practice in children. If this spirit be not acquired in childhood, it is seldom acquired at all.

* From the earliest times, the Popes have ever succoured suffering humanity, lavishing their means in building orphanages, hospitals and asylums. They have always patronized and developed, in no stinted way, the arts and sciences in the service of Religion. The late Holy Father, Leo XIII., did in this regard but follow in the footsteps of many saintly predecessors.

121. THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

"The Cross of Christ." Phil. iii. 18.

i. One distinctive mark of a Catholic is the sign of the Cross.

ii. The text suggests a few thoughts on the subject.

Sign of the Cross:

i. Motives for making it.

a. To remind us of the Bl. Trinity.
By the words that are used.

b. To remind us of the death of Christ.
By the very form that is used.

c. To revive our *Faith* in
1. The Unity and Trinity of God.
2. The Incarnation and Redemption.
As a photo recalls an absent person.

d. To strengthen our *Hope*.
1. Memorial that all blessings come through the Cross.
2. Fostering a habit of seeking aid through it.

e. To nourish our *Charity*, symbol of
1. Patience, in disciples of Christ.
2. Fortitude, in soldiers of Christ.

ii. Use of this sign:

a. Known probably in the days of the Apostles.

b. In public worship: *e.g.*
1. Some 50 times in the Mass.
2. Often in the Divine Office.
3. In the administration of the Sacraments: *e.g.* 14 times in Baptism.
4. On everything used in God's service: altars, linen, etc.

c. In personal devotions: *e.g.*
1. Morning and evening, to gain God's protection.

2. Before and after prayer.
3. Before and after meals.
   Even the pagans used prayer at meals.
   S. Benedict and the poisoned cup.*
4. In temptation and dangers of soul.
   The Devil fears the Cross, by which he was vanquished.
5. In dangers of body: *e.g.* by it
   S. Dominic raised a dead person: Aug. 4.
   S. Tibertius extinguished a conflagration: Aug. 11.
   S. Roch healed the sick: Aug. 16.
   S. Hilarion stayed the ravages of a flood: Oct. 21.
   S. Martin stayed the fall of a tree on him: Nov. 11.
   In hoc signo vinces.
6. Before our chief acts and undertakings:
   a. To sanctify them, and gain God's blessing. For,
   β. God it is who gives the increase: 1 Cor. iii. 6.

iii. Indulgences:
   a. 50 days, if made with the words.
   b. 100 days, if with Holy Water.

Lessons:

i. Fear not to make the sign of the Cross, as required.
ii. Make it on the heart in temptation and trial.
iii. Have a Crucifix in every Catholic home.
iv. Meditation on the "Cross of Christ" gives patience and courage.

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* A glass of poisoned wine was one day presented to S. Benedict; according to his custom, he made over it the sign of the Cross, and immediately the glass was shattered, and a serpent came forth from it. —*His Life:* Mch. 21.

122. PREDESTINATION.

"Whose names are in the book of life." Phil. iv. 3.

i. Predestination, the knowledge God has as to who will be saved.
One of the most difficult questions in all theology.
ii. Some thoughts on the subject may thus be useful.

Book of Life:

i. Names may be written herein in a two-fold manner:
a. Conditionally: through grace in life.
1. Souls fighting generously against their enemies.
2. S. Paul mentions Clement and his other fellow-labourers.
b. Absolutely: through glory in eternity.
ii. Frequently mentioned in Scripture: *e.g.*
A favour to be written in that Book: Dan. xii. 1.
A curse to be struck out of it: Ps. lviii. 9.
The fellow-labourers of S. Paul: Phil. iv. 3.
Similar expressions in the Apocalypse: xiii. 8: xx. 12.
iii. Means: God's knowledge of the eternal decree, whereby He has predestined some to glory.

Predestination leaves free the will of man:

i. God's decree is eternal, unchangeable like Himself. But,
ii. God predestines only according to man's conduct which is prior.
The log in the stream.*
iii. God's Will is
a. Antecedent: determining a thing apart from circumstances.
God wills all men to be saved: 1 Tim. ii. 4.
b. Consequent: willing what, apart from circumstances, He would not have willed.
Eternal punishment of those who die in mortal sin.

The Predestined:

i. God wills the salvation of more than the predestined only: *e.g.*

a. He willed that none entrusted to Christ should perish: Jn. vi. 39.
Yet Judas was one of them and is lost: Mth. xxvi. 24.
b. He desired the salvation of Jerusalem, but she would not: Mth. xxiii. 37.

ii. God wills even all men to be saved:
a. Scripture plainly asserts this:
Christ, a propitiation for the sins of the whole world: 1 Jn. ii. 2.
Christ takes away the sin of the world: Jn. i. 29.
He died for all men: 2 Cor. v. 15: 1 Tim. ii. 6.
God wills the salvation of all men: 1 Tim. ii. 4.
b. Fathers of the Church speak freely in the same sense: *e.g.*
Passage from S. Augustine.†
c. Damnation occurs through failure of some condition.
1. In adults, the will to do one's duty.
2. God is just, and no one is condemned, unless through his own fault.
d. No one certain of his predestination, except through a revelation: *Cl. Trent*, vi. 16.
1. S. Paul warns us to take heed: 1 Cor. x. 12.
2. He bids us work out our salvation with fear: Phil. ii. 12.
e. As to the number actually saved, we shall know nothing till the last day.

Signs of Predestination (lessons):

i. Penance and good works in reparation of sin.
ii. Care to avoid sin.
iii. Frequentation of the Sacraments.
iv. Devotion to the Bl. Virgin and S. Joseph.

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* If you see a log floating down the river, you know it will soon be lost in the ocean. It is not lost because you know it, but you know it because it is lost—Our future lot does not depend on God's decree, but His decree depends on our conduct foreseen by Him.

† The will of God is that all men should be saved, but not in such sort as to take from them their free-will, according to their good or evil use of which, they will be judged with absolute justice.—*De Catech. Rud.*

123. GOOD WORKS.

"Fruitful in every good work." Col. i. 10.

i. As fruits of the earth preserve temporal life, so good works secure eternal life.
They enable us to "walk worthy of God."

ii. Good works may be summed up under three heads: viz.

I. **Prayer**: the homage of our *Soul*.

i. The raising up of mind and heart to God.
In Adoration, Reparation, Thanks and Petition.

ii. Necessary to all men,
a. As the ordinary means of grace: Mth. vii. 7.
b. Often inculcated in Scripture: Ecclus. vii. 10; Col. iv. 2.
c. Example of Our Lord and His Saints.

iii. Comprises:
a. Meditation.
b. Daily devotions and ejaculations.
c. Holy Mass, and Church Services.
d. Frequentation of the Sacraments.
e. Actions done for God's glory.

iv. Effects: Prayer
a. Acquits us of our debt of homage to God.
b. Acknowledges our dependence on Him.
c. Atones for past sin.
d. Is all powerful in Heaven: Mth. xxi. 22.
e. Brings us grace here, and glory hereafter.

II. **Fasting**: the homage of the *Body*.

i. Restraint of the appetite, as to quantity and quality of food.

ii. First command of God to man: Gen. ii. 17.

iii. Includes:
  a. Voluntary mortification, in any form.
  b. Labours and trials borne in patience.
  c. Temptations manfully resisted.
iv. Effects: Fasting
  a. Appeases God's anger.
    The Ninevites: Jon. iii. 5, 10.
  b. Subdues the passions.
  c. Renovates the whole spiritual man.
  d. Often benefits even bodily health.

III. **Almsdeeds**: the homage of our *Goods*.

i. Giving to another, for God's sake.
ii. Standard at the great judgment-day: Mth. xxv. 35.
iii. Comprises:
  a. Food and clothing given to the poor.
  b. Money for the same.
  c. Any kindness shown to others.
  d. Spiritual and corporal works of mercy.
iv. Effects: Almsdeeds
  a. Renders God favourable to us.
  b. Gives power to prayer and intercession.
  c. Detaches the heart from things of earth.
  d. Brings even temporal rewards and blessings.

Lessons:

i. Be convinced of the necessity and advantages of good works: viz.
  a. *Satisfaction* to God's offended Justice (past).
  b. *Impetration*, power with God (present).
  c. *Merit* for eternal reward (future).
ii. Practise them in some form, especially in Advent.
  If we cannot do all three, we can do one or other of them.

124. OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

"Increasing in the knowledge of God." Col. i. 10.

i. One of man's chief duties is to know his Creator.
ii. A few considerations on this subject.

Knowledge of God:

i. Unless we first know God, we cannot love and serve Him.
ii. This knowledge of God
  a. Will teach us how to love and serve Him.
  b. Will furnish motives to facilitate it.
iii. Unless we love and serve God, we shall not save our souls. Yet,
iv. Salvation is the very object for which we were created.
v. Hence the need of knowing God and His holy Will.
  We are none of us so fully instructed, as we should be.
vi. God has given us a revelation of Himself.
  How are we to find it?

Means to know God:

i. *Catechism*, for children.
  a. Of the utmost importance, as a first means.
  b. To be learnt carefully, and word for word.
  c. Responsibility of parents in seeing to this.
ii. *Explanation of Catechism:*
  a. The book itself, the merest outline of Christian Doctrine.
  b. The text not always easy to understand.
  c. Developments and explanations are therefore necessary.
  d. Need of regular and punctual attendance at Church and School.
  e. Further responsibility of parents herein.
iii. *Sermons:*
  a. On Dogma:
    1. Various truths and doctrines of Revelation.
    2. Exact and clear teaching, most essential nowadays.

3. A means of strengthening our Faith and Devotion.
4. A means of replying to objections and enlightening others.

b. On Morals:

1. Practical obligations flowing from dogmatic truths.
2. Virtues and vices found in common life.
3. Especially the duties of our state in life.
4. The various practices of devotion in the Church.

Words of the Curé of Ars.*

iv. *Spiritual Reading:*

a. At least from time to time, especially on Sundays.
b. An effectual means of increasing knowledge and piety.
c. Books, treating of

1. Holy Writ, the inspired word of God.
2. Dogmatic and historical subjects.
3. The great religious questions of the day.
4. The Lives of the Saints.

d. Nourishes, stimulates and strengthens the soul in God's love.

Lessons:

i. Remember we are told to *increase* in the knowledge of God.
ii. Not to advance is to lose ground.
iii. Repugnance to instruction, a sign of the times. Yet,
iv. Wilful ignorance of religion is a sin against God.
How great this ignorance nowadays among all classes.
v. Take therefore the means of instruction within your reach.
Advent is at hand, a time most suitable for this.

* I think that one who does not properly hear the word of God will not save his soul; he will not know what to do for that. An ignorant person is like a dying man, lying unconscious: he neither knows the malice of sin, nor the beauty of grace, nor the value of his soul: he goes from sin to sin, like a rag dragged in the mire.—*Curé of Ars.*

SERMON PLANS.

II.

ON THE GOSPELS.

125. THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

"The Son of man coming in a cloud." Lke. xxi. 27.

i. Advent begins with the description of the Judgment Day.
Appropriate thought for this holy season.
ii. Give some consideration to-day to this great truth of Revelation.

Christ will come:

i. In a cloud:
a. To temper the resplendent majesty of His Body.
1. Too overwhelming, even for the Just.
2. How much more so for the Wicked!
b. As God often appeared of old: *e.g.*
To Moses: Ex. xix. 9.
To Daniel: vii. 13.
ii. According to common interpretation, in Josaphat:
"Into the valley of Josaphat . . . there I will sit to judge." Joel iii. 12.
a. Near Gethsemane and Calvary, scenes of former humiliations.
b. Hence the symbolical custom of
1. Building Churches east and west. (Ex. xxvii. 12, 13.)
2. Burying the Faithful, feet to the east.
iii. With great power:
a. His first coming in Bethlehem was in weakness and contempt.
b. His second will be in glory and strength.
c. Accompanied by legions of angels.
d. The Cross borne before Him, brighter than the sun:
A source of joy to the Good, of anguish to the Wicked.
iv. To judge all without exception, as He died for all.
a. Separation of the good from the bad: Mth. xxv. 33.
b. On which side shall *I* be? What a thought!
v. The Judgment, and final Sentence on each one—for eternity.

Why a second Judgment?

i. The last Judgment will not reverse the first.
   a. God is all Knowledge and Justice.
   b. He cannot deceive, nor be deceived.
   c. Hence the second Judgment will confirm the first.

ii. God's Justice and Providence will be manifested to the world.
   a. The Good are often persecuted and afflicted here; while
   b. The Wicked often prosper and succeed.
      "Behold these are sinners . . . yet they have obtained riches." Ps. lxxii. 12.
   c. The General Judgment will rectify and justify all, by rewards and punishments otherwise dispensed than now!

iii. Our Lord humbled in life will then be glorified before men.
   What a victory! What a magnificent triumph!

iv. Our bodies also will then receive their reward.
   a. The body shares the austerity of the elect.
   b. The body shares the sinful pleasures of the damned.
   c. The body can only be rewarded or punished after the Resurrection.

v. The General Judgment will complete the award of each one.
   a. A man's works good or bad live after him: *e.g.*
      A missioner's labours: S. Augustine in England.
      An author's good books: S. Francis of Sales.
      A writer's bad books: Voltaire.
   b. The total results can only be known at the last day.
      Only then can the full award be meted out.
   c. An encouragement to do good and edify others.
   d. A warning to avoid scandal and bad example.

Lessons:

i. Meditation on these thoughts will sanctify Advent.
ii. Remembrance of the Judgment, a protection against sin: Ecclus. vii. 40.

126. CHRIST THE JUDGE.

"Then shall they see the Son of man coming." Lke. xxi. 27.

i. The seriousness of life arises from the certainty of future Judgment.
   Every hour, every act has to be accounted for.
ii. No thought has such a steadying effect on life as this.
iii. Hence this Advent, consider Christ coming to judge mankind:

As Master:

i. It is often difficult to say who is now our master.
   a. With some it is *money*.
   b. With others, *worldliness*.
   c. Or again, *self-indulgence*.
   d. Or, *human respect*, public opinion, etc.
ii. In weakness, or want of faith, we often yield to these. But,
iii. At the last day, *Christ* will show Himself the Master of all.
   No one will be able to resist His power: Esth.xiii.9.
iv. How many, to whom this revelation will bring confusion and terror: *e.g.*
   a. They who persistently forgot Him in life.
   b. Who openly broke His law.
   c. Who opposed and fought against His Church.
   d. Who lived with and for the world.
v. Happy they who, at the last, can cry out with the Hebrews:

   "Show us Thy face, and we shall be saved." Ps. lxxix. 4.

vi. Truly will the sceptre of authority be resumed, in the eyes of all men.

As Rectifier:

i. Wrong cannot finally triumph.
ii. This firm conviction in mankind is proof
   a. That God exists; and,
   b. That the soul is immortal.
iii. At the last day, a strong hand will put all things right.

iv. Hence, however much I rebel now, I must finally yield to God.
v. Happy they who remember that life is only a temporary trial:
a. Wherein the good oft seem without support.
b. While evil seems to thrive and prosper: Ps. lxxii. 12.
vi. Let the thought of the Judgment day
a. Restrain you in the midst of prosperity.
b. Comfort and strengthen you in adversity. For,
vii. At the Judgment day, all things will be rectified.

As Avenger:

i. On those who resisted Him to the last:
a. Not because He is subject to passion, like men.
b. But because good *must* triumph, and evil perish.
ii. If we are striving to resist mortal sin, and live according to God, the thought of an avenging Judge need not distress us.
iii. But if evil habits possess us, let us beware in time. Like the Alpine climber, with the precipice before him. For,
iv. Death may overtake us any time, and cast us into the abyss.

As Rewarder:

i. The good shall reap the fruits of their faith and patience: Mth. x. 42.
ii. In judgment, they will see the face of Jesus gentle and smiling.
iii. Those who have struggled on will be rewarded with peace eternal.
iv. Courage therefore in well-doing.

Three Means of obtaining a favourable judgment.

i. Judge not your neighbour: Lke. vi. 37.
Repress unkind thought and language.
ii. As we deal with others, God will deal with us: Mth. xviii. 35.
True kindness in act will obtain mercy.
iii. Let us judge ourselves: 1 Cor. xi. 31.
By self-examination and humble confession.

127. MIRACLES.

"The blind see, the lame walk," etc. Mth. xi. 5.

i. These wonders are manifestations of the power and goodness of Christ.
ii. They are called miracles—subject for to-day's instruction.

Miracles:

i. Effects beyond the order and laws of the whole of created nature: *S. Thos.*
ii. Of two kinds:
  a. Suspension of the known laws of nature: *e.g.*
    If a man should walk on water.
  b. Out of the ordinary course of nature, and requiring power, superior to that of natural agents.
    Curing diseases in a moment.
iii. Possible:
  a. The laws of nature are not immutable *in se.*
    God, who decreed them, can alter or suspend them.
  b. They do not imply contradiction or change in God.
    God has not bound Himself to act for ever according to those laws.

"God changes His works: His counsels remain the same." *S. Aug.*

Instruments used in miracles:

i. RATIONAL BEINGS:
  a. Angels: e.g.
    Protection of Daniel among the lions: Dan. vi. 22.
    Moving the waters of Bethsaida: Jn. v. 4.
  b. Men, in whom God requires
    1. Internal co-operation, through Faith and Confidence.

2. External co-operation: *e.g.*
   - *α.* By command:
     - Joshua, commanding the sun: Jos. x. 12.
     - S. Peter and the lame man: Acts iii. 6.
   - *β.* By prayer:
     - Elias, for fire from Heaven: 3 Kgs. xviii. 36.
   - *γ.* By touching:
     - Elias and the widow's son: 3 Kgs. xvii. 21.
   - *δ.* By affirmation:
     - Eliseus and his servant's leprosy: 4 Kgs. v. 27.

ii. Irrational Beings: 1 Cor. i. 27.
   - *a.* For *correction:*
     - Speech in Balaam's ass: Numb. xxii. 28.
   - *b.* For *punishment:*
     - Hornets in Canaan: Ex. xxiii. 28.
   - *c.* For *favours:*
     - Ravens feeding Elias: 3 Kgs. xvii. 6.

iii. Inanimate Beings: *e.g.*
   - *a. Relics:*
     - Eliseus, dividing the waters, with his master's cloak: 4 Kgs. ii. 14.
     - Handkerchiefs from the body of S. Paul: Acts xix. 12.
   - *b. Holy Images:*
     - The brazen serpent: Numb. xxi. 9.
   - *c. Holy Things:*
     - The Ark, dividing the Jordan: Jos. iii.
   - *d. Holy Places:*
     - God's promises at the dedication of the Temple: 2 Par. vi. 15.
     - Naaman cleansed in the Jordan: 4 Kgs. v. 14.
     - The pool of Siloe: Jn. ix. 7.

Lessons:

i. God's mercy and power are not shortened.
ii. Miracles are found all through the Church's history
iii. Even nowadays they occur: Lourdes, Holywell.
iv. Hence confidence in God in every want.

128. SPIRITUAL DISEASES.

"The blind see, the lame walk." Mth. xi. 5.

i. Bodily ailments are types of ailments in the soul.

ii. As Christ healed the former, so can He also the latter: for,

He is the Saviour of the whole man.

iii. Consider some spiritual diseases of the soul.

The blind see:

i. They are spiritually blind, who

a. Are wanting in faith.

b. Are ignorant of divine truths.

c. Do not recognize evil, where evil is.

d. Are led and governed by their passions.

ii. Remedies:

a. Prayer to God: "Lord, that I may see."

b. Sincerity with one's self.

c. Taking means to know God and His holy Law. Such as instruction, spiritual reading, study, and enquiry.

The lame walk:

i. They are spiritually lame, who

a. Walk not according to God's Law.

b. Follow not the footsteps of Christ: 1 Jn. ii. 6.

c. Stray from the path of virtue and religion.

d. Tire of the practices of Christian life.

e. Wish to serve both God and the world: Mth. vi. 24.

ii. Remedies:

a. Take Christ's example, as your guide through life: Jn. xiii. 15.

b. Perseverance in well-doing.

c. Divide not the heart, but give it wholly to God. His claims to it, and our own interests demand it.

The lepers are cleansed:

i. They are spiritual lepers, who
   a. Have sin in the soul, mortal or venial.
   b. Yield to unmortified passions.
      Pride, anger, sensuality, etc.
   c. Most hateful before God.
      As leprosy of the body before men.

ii. Remedies:
   a. Frequentation of the Sacraments.
      The lepers had to show themselves to the priests: Lke. xvii. 14.
   b. Avoidance of occasions of sin.
   c. Thought of Death and Judgment: Ecclus. vii. 40

The deaf hear:

i. They are spiritually deaf, who
   a. Refuse to hear God's Word:
      Sermons, instructions, spiritual reading.
   b. Lull the voice of conscience.
   c. Disobey the commands of lawful superiors.
   d. Hearken rather to the devil, the world, and the flesh.

ii. Remedies:
   a. Shun all idle gossip, detraction, etc.
   b. Accept correction in the spirit of meekness.
   c. If you hear God's voice, harden not your heart: Ps. xciv. 8.

Lessons:

i. Let each one recognize his own spiritual defect; and,
ii. Whatever it be, appeal now to the Divine Physician; for,
iii. Advent and Christmas are times of special mercy and healing grace.

129. SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

"Who art thou?" Jn. i. 19.

i. Addressed to S. John, we may address these words to ourselves.

ii. In this aspect, brief as they are, they are full of suggestion.

iii. Let each one seriously ask himself, and answer the question—

Who art thou?

i. As to my *being:*

a. I come from nothingness, created by God Almighty.

1. My body, subject to sickness, misery and death.
2. My soul, a prey to passion and evil inclinations.

b. I live for awhile on earth, then I must die:

1. My body going to rottenness in the tomb.
2. My soul falling into the hands of its Judge.

c. As my being is from God, He has rights over me.

1. *Supreme:* Him I must obey before all: Mth. iv. 10.
2. *Absolute:* Of me and mine He can freely dispose: Job i. 21.
3. *Universal:* Extending to all I have, or am.
4. *Unavoidable:* Willing or not, I must submit.
5. *Eternal:* Beginning in time, but having no end. For,

d. As I thus belong to God, I shall be in His presence for ever:

1. In *Heaven;* if I love and serve Him here.
2. In *Hell;* if I refuse to obey His Law.

ii. As to my *vocation:*

a. I am a Christian, through God's special grace.

1. Favoured with the friendship of my Creator.
2. Aided by the Sacraments, etc., of Holy Church

b. Do I correspond with the dignity thus conferred?
1. In my manner of life.
2. In my appreciation and use of such helps.
3. In the care I give to the question of salvation.

c. The greater my dignity, the greater also my responsibility: Lke. xii. 48.

iii. As to my *position in life:*
a. By profession, trade, labour, etc.
b. Do I fulfil the various duties of this my position?
c. Do I so use temporal goods, as not to risk the eternal?
d. Do I observe the laws of justice, in all my dealings?

iv. As to *length of days:*
a. When was I born, and when shall I die?
b. No sooner am I in life, than I begin to die.
c. The longest life is but as a shadow to eternity.
d. The patriarchs lived long years on earth: *e.g.*
Adam lived 930 years!
Noah lived 950 years!
Yet of each it is said, at last: "And he died.' Gen. ix. 29.

Conclusions:

i. As I am God's creature, I must
a. Humble my nothingness before Him.
b. Recognize and obey His Law.
c. Live a life worthy of Him.

ii. As I am a Christian, I must
a. Avail myself of God's greater graces.
b. Aim at higher and better things.

iii. According to my condition in life, I must conscientiously fulfil my various duties and obligations.

iv. As I am not made for time, but for eternity, I must
a. Ever keep my last end in view: Ecclus. vii. 40.
b. Sacrifice everything to attain to that end.

v. Advent is a time for such thoughts and resolutions.

130. MISSION OF S. JOHN BAPTIST.

"I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." Jn. i. 23.

i. On three Sundays in Advent, the Baptist is brought before us.

ii. A Saint prominent amongst all, especially as Our Lord's Precursor.

iii. Two points to consider in regard to him.

I. The Holy Ghost's testimony to John:

i. From the Old Testament:

a. To enquirers John quotes *Isaias xl. 3.*

b. To others, Our Lord answers from another prophet: Mal. iii. 1.

ii. In the New Testament:

a. His birth miraculously announced, like Our Lord's: Lke. i. 13.

b. He is sanctified in his mother's womb, like Jeremias: i. 5.

Hence the Church honours his birth: with other Saints, their death.

c. His Mission was divine, not self-imposed:

"A man sent from God, whose name was John." Jn. i. 6.

1. He preaches penance and pardon, anticipating the Redeemer.
2. He baptizes his converts, and hence called the Baptist.
3. So holy, that he is taken for the Messiah.
4. He is independent, and fearless in denouncing Herod: Mth. xiv. 4.

d. Our Lord's testimony specially exalts him:

"More than a prophet." Mth. xi. 9.

"There hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Mth. xi. 11.

Our Lord condescends to be baptized by him:

iii. Hence the Church bids us honour and imitate the Baptist:

a. Prominence given to his name and work: *e.g.*

1. In the *Confiteor*, Litany of the Saints, etc.

2. These Sundays recall his preaching and example.

b. A great Saint, worthy of being honoured and invoked by all.

II. John's testimony to Christ: Jn. i. 8.

i. His testimony:

"One in the midst of you, whom you know not." Jn. i. 26.
"Behold the Lamb of God." Jn. i. 29.
"He that shall come after me is mightier than I." Mth. iii. 11.

ii. Testimony difficult to offer:

a. Few outward evidences of His mission to appeal to.

b. He had to preach one unknown and rejected.

"One whom you know not." "His own received Him not." Jn. i.

c. He preached *before* Christ, the Apostles *after*, with His example before them.

iii. Testimony free from self-seeking:

a. He is taken for Elias, and even the Messiah.

b. He disclaims the honour, and

c. Simply announces Another, greater than himself. Pride so often thinks itself greater than the reality.

iv. Testimony strengthened by his mode of life.

a. His penance and mortification: Mth. iii. 4.

b. His humility in shunning all self-seeking.

v. Not intimidated by opposition:

a. He preaches the same lessons to all, despite consequences.

b. Heeding not the judgment of men: 1 Cor. iv. 3.

Lessons:

i. All must give testimony of Christ, at least by their good lives.

ii. Sometimes by speech also, in favour of justice and religion; for,
Silence may often be interpreted as approving evil.

iii. Prayer to the courageous Baptist, against fear and human respect.

iv. Lively Faith in the Messiah, despite all appearances.

131. PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS.

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Lke. iii. 4.

i. These words from Isaias are appropriate to these days.

ii. As the Baptist preached to the Jews, the Church speaks to us: viz.

Four chief points:

i. Every valley shall be filled: (negative sins).
   a. A valley may represent a void to be filled in: *i.e.*
   b. Negative sins of omission to be repaired: *e.g.*
      1. Omission of daily prayers.
      2. Neglect of Sunday Mass, so common!
      3. Indifference to the Sacraments.
      4. Failure to make restitution of goods or character.

         Duty as difficult as it is essential.
      5. Duties of state of life unheeded.
      6. Human respect, or want of moral courage.
   c. Sins of omission are often as grievous as sins of commission.

ii. Every mountain and hill brought low: (positive sins).
   a. Of greater sins (mountain) none will deny the guilt: *e.g.*

      Pride, impurity, grievous injustice. But,
   b. Lesser sins (hill) are often despised: *e.g.*
      1. Antipathy to certain persons.
      2. Meanness of character and conduct.
      3. Touchiness, or jealousy.
      4. Impatience and irritability.
      5. Curiosity, and its evil consequences.
   c. All these must be resisted and brought low by victory.

iii. The crooked made straight: *e.g.*
- *a.* Deceitfulness and duplicity.
- *b.* All forms of injustice to others.
- *c.* Hypocrisy.*
- *d.* Doing evil that good may come.
- *e.* Vicious habits to be corrected.

iv. Rough ways made plain (by the coming grace of God):
- *a.* Difficulties of the spiritual life smoothed down.
- *b.* Observance of the commandments facilitated.
- *c.* Even counsels of perfection made easy.
- *d.* Trials of life made bearable.

Conclusion:

i. Let us thus prepare ourselves for Our Lord's coming. Putting into practical form the words of the Prophet.

ii. Then shall we see the salvation of God, *i.e.* Jesus our Saviour.
- *a.* In the stable at Bethlehem; or,
- *b.* In the Holy Eucharist, by faith.
- *c.* Here, by the light of grace.
- *d.* Hereafter, in the light of glory.

iii. Different receptions Our Lord meets with:
- *a.* The *bad* Christian receives Him like the Jews.
- *b.* The *good* Christian, like the animals in the stable.
- *c.* The *fervent* Christian, like the Shepherds.
- *d.* The *perfect* Christian, even as Mary and Joseph.

iv. Be it our endeavour to approach the Crib with perfect dispositions.

Then only shall we fully realize the meaning of the Incarnation.

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* As a tomb when closed may be made beautiful to the eye, but once opened is most horrible to behold, so the hypocrite, as long as he is not known may seem worthy of praise, but once discovered is abominable indeed—*S. Chrysostom.* Leaven corrupts the whole mass of dough, and hypocrisy undoes all the works of a man.

132. GOD'S LOVE FOR MAN.

"All flesh shall see the salvation of God." Lke. iii. 6.

i. As the sun is in the physical world, Love is in the social world.
   a. It infuses warmth and beauty into the most ordinary existence.
   b. The world would be dreary indeed, except for the sunshine of love.
ii. If human love be full of beauty and gladness, how much more so God's love!
iii. As we are now to celebrate a mystery of love, consider the

I. Intensity of God's Love:

i. He never wearies expressing it: *e.g.*
   "Fear not . . . I have redeemed thee . . . thou art Mine." Is. xliii. 1.
   "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Jer. xxxi. 3.
   "As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you." Jn. xv. 9.
ii. Our Lord represents Himself as
   a. The devoted father of an ungrateful son: Lke. xv.
   b. The shepherd, tending his flock: *Ibid.*
   c. The good Samaritan: Lke. x.
   d. The hen, gathering her chickens together: Mth. xxiii. 37.
iii. His love is not inactive, but proves itself in deeds:
   a. Our Creation and Preservation.
   b. The bestowal of the supernatural Life.
   c. The abasement of the Incarnation.
   d. The Real Presence, that we might not be orphans: Jn. xiv. 18.
   e. The Sacrament of Holy Communion: Prov. viii. 31.
   f. Finally, the Beatific Vision, as our eternal reward.
   All which proves love so intense as almost to crush our hearts.
iv. Human love is the veriest mockery of love, compared with that which God shows to the humblest soul.

II. **Personal Character** of God's Love:

i. Man yearns to be loved individually, and not merely as one of a crowd.
   a. We may doubt a love that is shared by others.
   b. This may be just of human and finite love.
      1. Where there is gain in quantity, there is loss in quality.
      2. As a deep river would have no depth, if spread over miles of land.

ii. God's love is eminently personal, and from heart to heart.
   a. It is like the divine knowledge, embracing every single existence.
   b. *We* give thought to one thing only at a time: so also our love.

iii. God loves me individually, because
   a. He has made me to His image.
   b. He has enriched me with His Grace.
   c. He has made me His child, and heir to His kingdom: Gal. ii. 20.

iv. This love of me increases, as my own personal sanctity increases.
   But it is quite independent of the love lavished on others.

v. Realizing this, we come to understand the joyousness of monks and hermits:
   a. No other supposition can explain it.
   b. Even we in the world must draw our gladness from the same.

Lessons:

i. A consoling thought—that God loves each one intensely and personally.

ii. To love is to wish well:
   a. If a man desire happiness for another, or give him a favour, we conclude he has true love.
   b. The cost of the gift marks in some measure the degree of the love.

iii. Apply this principle to God, and see what *He* gives—Himself.
   How strange and sad that, even so, men love creatures more.

iv. Realize God's Love in the approaching festival.

133. CHILD OF BETHLEHEM.

"You shall find the Infant . . . laid in a manger." Lke. ii. 12.

i. To-day the Christian world thinks of Bethlehem and the divine Child.

ii. Let us this morning think of Him, and consider three questions:

I. Who is this Child?

i. To all appearances an ordinary child and of the poorest. But,

ii. Looked at through faith, a child of all children most perfect, etc.

iii. The Child:
- *a.* *Promised* of old to the world: Gen. iii. 15: etc.
- *b.* *Prefigured: e.g.* in Abel, Isaac, Moses, etc.
- *c.* *Foretold* by the Prophets, ages beforehand.

iv. Child whom angels were sent to announce: Lke. ii. 10.

v. The Son of God Himself, the Word made flesh.

vi. The Child named Jesus, who
- *a.* Grew in wisdom and grace, with God and man.
- *b.* Worked such wonders among the people.
- *c.* Died on the Cross, and finally ascended to Heaven.
- *d.* Founded the Church of which we are members.
- *e.* Remains yet among us in the Bl. Sacrament.
- *f.* Will be our future Judge, and, let us hope, Reward.

vii. Such the Child whom the Heavens adore this day! Let *us* too adore in faith and humility.

II. How is He born?

i. In a way quite different from what man would expect.
- *a.* Not in outward greatness and comfort.
- *b.* Not of wealthy parents, nor in a palace.
- *c.* But in poverty, humility and suffering.

ii. Edict of Augustus, and the journey to Bethlehem, some 70 miles.

The Cave . . . The Crib . . . The animals . . . The Angels . . . The Shepherds.

iii. Mary and Joseph tending to His wants.
iv. Angels adoring unseen.

III. Why thus born?

i. Why not born in splendour and pomp?
   a. According to human ideas, He should have been. But,
   b. God's thoughts and designs differ from those of men: Is. lv. 8.
ii. To condemn and expiate our pride, avarice and sensuality.
iii. To oppose, by His example,
   a. *Humility* to love of honours.
   b. *Poverty* to love of riches.
   c. *Mortification* to love of pleasure.
iv. To draw men to Himself.

> "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened." Mth. xi. 28.

   a. What more lovable than a child?
   b. What better calculated to inspire confidence?
   c. He does not terrify by magnificence and splendour.
v. That recognizing God in the Babe of Bethlehem, we be led to love the invisible things of God.
vi. What help and encouragement to the practice of virtue!

Lessons:

i. Great gladness and joy this day: Lke. ii. 10.
ii. Triple Mass allowed, representing Our Lord's
   a. *Eternal* birth from the Father, in Heaven.
   b. *Temporal* birth from His Mother, on Earth.
   c. *Spiritual* birth into our souls, by Grace.
iii. Receive Him worthily and well:
   a. Not like the Bethlehemites, or Herod.
   b. But like the Shepherds, even like Mary and Joseph.
iv. Imitate the virtues of His birth.
v. Go to visit Him in the Crib, or on the Altar.

134. THE INCARNATION.

"The Word was made flesh." Jn. i. 14.

i. This, the solemn expression of to-day's mystery.
ii. Mystery beyond the comprehension of man.
iii. Yet we may devote some thought to its definition.

The Word:

i. The offspring of mental activity is thought.
ii. The outward expression of thought is language, or word.
As in the case of this instruction.
iii. The knowledge the eternal Father has of Himself is the Son. Hence,
iv. The outward expression of that knowledge is called the Word.
Retaining His deity, majesty, glory and perfections.

Was made:

i. Not, was changed into flesh, or vice versa.
ii. Nor, was a third nature formed of the human and the divine.
iii. Nor, was a second personality assumed.
iv. But, became flesh, assuming our human nature.
a. Not for His own sake, who gained but humiliation and death.
b. But through purest love for man.
c. To redeem us from sin, misery and hell.
v. How great His love! How great our gratitude should be!

Flesh (man)**:**

i. Passing over the nature of the Angels.
ii. Taking to Himself the nature of man.
Inferior almost to the animals, because corrupted by sin.
iii. Degradation and humiliation of the Son of God in this!
Imagine any one taking the nature of an animal, to save it!
iv. It was this mystery, perhaps, the Angels were commanded to adore.
Many in pride refused, and so fell from God.

Two Natures therefore in Christ:

i. Each whole and entire, the two constituting the Man-God.

> "As the rational soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ." *Athan. Crd.*

a. The *Divine* nature, from the Father, from eternity. Through which He wrought His many miracles.

b. The *Human* nature, from His Mother, in time, In which He suffered and died.

ii. Typified, in the chalice at Mass, by

a. The *Wine*, not blessed, as recalling the Divinity.

b. The *Water*, blessed, as representing the Humanity.

iii. Most intimately united, yet not lost or confused.*

iv. Once assumed, the Humanity remains Christ's for ever.

v. This intimate union explains such expressions as:

> "I and the Father are one," (as God). Jn. x. 30.
> "The Father is greater than I," (as Man). Jn. xiv. 28.

vi. United in the one person of the Son of God.

vii. In assuming human nature, He still retains the divine.

A prince, though clothed in poverty, is still a prince.

viii. A double likeness thus established between God and man:

a. In the *Trinity*, man is like God, by the three powers of his one soul.

b. In the *Incarnation*, God is like man, by the two natures of his one person.

Lessons:

i. Faith, and adoration of the "Word made flesh."

ii. Gratitude for this mystery of Redemption.

iii. Reverence for that same Word present on the altar.

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* Melt down two pieces of iron, and they mix and become lost in each other; but melt a piece of gold and a piece of iron; you may weld them into one metal bar, yet, though closely united, they remain distinct from each other. So, with the two natures of Our Lord, in the Incarnation.

135. THE PROPHECY OF SIMEON.

i. As to Our Lord: He is to be set for
   a. The fall of many.
   b. The resurrection of many.
   c. A sign to be contradicted.
ii. As to the Bl. Virgin: a sword of grief shall pierce her soul.
iii. Consider the prophecy, and the principles it implies.

I. **The Fall of many:** the involuntary cause of many being lost.
   First Principle: all the evil we do is from ourselves.
i. Sin arises from our own choice of what is against the Law of God: Osee xiii. 9.
ii. Man's will is free and God will not force His noble gift.
   Though He punishes or rewards, according to our use of it.
iii. The Divine Child came to found the kingdom of the Church.
iv. God's design was to bring the Jews to faith and salvation,
   Though foreseeing that many would resist.
v. Yet He did not alter His design:
   a. The rebellion of the Jews gave the Gospel to the Gentiles; and,
   b. A greater harvest of souls was thus gathered to the Church.
vi. God does not will evil, though permitting it;
   a. Man is made for salvation:
   b. If he fail therein, he alone is responsible.
   c. Thus is Our Lord the indirect cause of the "fall of many."

II. **The Resurrection of many:** the direct cause of justification and salvation.
   Second principle: we owe to God all the good that is in us.
i. Though man may ruin himself, he cannot alone save himself. For,
   All creation together could not repair the evil of sin. But,

ii. Christ merited reconciliation, and our co-operation with grace.
He is thus the cause of our rising spiritually from death to life.
iii. If we possess faith, humility, etc., it is to Him we owe them.
iv. He is the way we must follow for eternal life; being,
a. The direct and voluntary cause of our justification before God.
b. Being thus set for the "resurrection of many."

III. **A Sign to be contradicted**: through our opposition to Him.
Third Principle: we contradict God's design, when we neglect salvation.
i. The means of salvation are, chiefly:
a. Belief of the truths of revelation.
b. Observance of the Commandments.
c. Reception of the Sacraments.
d. Use of prayer.
ii. It is worth while, at the year end, to see if
a. We are aiming at salvation through these means.
b. We refer all things to the glory of God.
c. We try to repair past evil by penance.

IV. **Sword of Sorrow**, in Mary's heart.
Fourth Principle: it is the lot of all on earth to suffer: Job vii. 1.
i. The depth of Mary's grief may be measured, by
a. Him in whom she suffered—her beloved Son.
b. The dignity of His person—the Son of God.
c. The grievous pains He endured in body and soul.
d. The duration of her sufferings—the lifetime of her Son.
ii. Through her sanctified sufferings, she became the "Queen of Martyrs."
iii. By her personal experience, she can truly be the "Comfort of the afflicted."

Be the coming of Jesus your resurrection, and not your fall.

136. THE DIVINE INFANCY.

"They returned into Galilee, to their city Nazareth." Lke. ii. 39.

i. Every portion of Our Lord's life and character is deserving of study.

ii. The close of to-day's Gospel recalls His childhood and youth.

His home in Nazareth a humiliation to Our Lord.

i. It drew on Him the contempt of men, because
   - *a.* Nazareth was a despised place.*
   - *b.* This fact imparted obscurity to its inhabitants
   - *c.* Jesus hereby teaches us humility; for,
   - *d.* We sometimes take pride in our place of birth; or,
   - *e.* We are ashamed of our humble origin. Yet,
   - *f.* We should be content with the dispositions of Providence therein.

ii. It created prejudice against Him.
   - *a.* One of His followers even doubted His claims, through living there.

     "Can anything of good come from Nazareth?" Jn. i. 46.
   - *b.* Thus did the Galileans think: how much more the rest of Judea who despised Galilee?
   - *c.* The prejudices of men about nationality, origin, etc. often foolish and unfounded.
   - *d.* Bear with them, if subject to them, and let them not disturb you, nor prevent you seeking perfection.

iii. It drew many insults on Him.
   - *a.* How often was He called, in mockery,
     1. Nazarene? as stated on His Cross: Jn. xix. 19.
     2. Galilean? as by Julian the Apostate.†
   - *b.* Yet the early Saints used these names to heal the sick and drive away the evil spirits: Acts iii. 6.
   - *c.* Bear humiliations and insults, so to obtain glory and reward.

The Child grew in wisdom and grace.

i. In Body, He grew in strength.
   a. To become a victim for man's sin to the glory of the Father.
   b. We strengthen too often for indulgence and sin.

ii. In His Soul, He grew in Wisdom.
   a. As Son of God, He was full of wisdom. But,
   b. He only showed of it what was suited to His age.
   c. A model for parents to present to their children. In humility, meekness, obedience, etc.

iii. He grew also in grace.
   a. Exterior charm of body. Hence was He
   "Beautiful above the sons of men." Ps. xliv. 3.
   b. Modesty and dignity of speech and bearing.
   c. Interior grace, which He came to restore to men.
   d. Parents strive to render their children attractive before men.
   e. Have they the same zeal to make them pleasing to God?
   f. Too often, even in young years, they are already sinners, and slaves to evil habits.

iv. Let parents study to make their children grow in grace like Jesus.

A fearful responsibility is theirs, in this respect!

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* It is remarkable that Nazareth, place so dear now to the Christian heart, is not mentioned in the Old Testament, nor by the historian, Josephus. So far as its subsequent history can be gathered, it never rose to distinction, till the time of the Crusades, and then it became again an insignificant village. There is a sort of latent beauty in the idea of Him, who made all things out of nothing, Himself coming forth before the world from a place that had no history.—*Thomson.*

† When Julian in battle was at length pierced by an arrow, receiving in his hand the blood from his wound, he is said to have cast it up to Heaven, exclaiming: "O Galilean, thou hast conquered me," and so saying, he died.

137. THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR.

"After eight days were accomplished." Lke. ii. 21.

i. God ordained that Jewish children should be circumcised on the eighth day.
Beginning of a new week, typical of a new life.
ii. Instead of a new week, consider to-day the New Year.
a. Congratulations to all on such an occasion.
b. Some thoughts now on the good use of the future.

The Old Year:

i. Another year just expired, now a thing of the past.
a. Its sorrows and joys, its pains and pleasures gone.
b. So also, its graces and blessings and sins.
Though the effects of all these may remain.
ii. For the past year, we owe to God a two-fold duty, of
a. *Reparation*, for evil committed.
b. *Gratitude*, for graces received.
iii. Many began it with ourselves who never saw the end of it.
a. They have entered the house of their eternity, for weal or for woe.
In this parish alone, . . . have died in the course of it.
b. The same some day will be said of us also.
Hence, it is well we should think seriously on

The New Year:

i. A further gift of time bestowed, by the Divine Mercy.
ii. A first reflexion: shall we see the end of it?
a. Millions will certainly not.
Some 90,000 daily pass out of life.
b. Even this very day, thousands have died already!
iii. A year will come, of which *we* shall see the beginning, but shall not reach the end.
If we really believe this, let us resolve to-day to take

The Chief Means to spend the year well:
Almost commonplaces, yet wonderfully efficacious in practice.

i. *Daily Prayer:*
   a. Source of spiritual strength and protection.
   b. Natural duty of rational beings—too often omitted. Hence,
   c. Teach young children to acquire and retain this salutary habit.

ii. *Weekly Mass:*
   a. God, the author of our time, might require us to give it all to Him.
   b. The voice of nature even bids us devote at least some of it to Him.
   c. God demands that one day in the week be consecrated to His service.
   d. The Church commands us to sanctify it by hearing Mass.
   e. Alas! how many fail to obey the simple command!
      Neglect of Sunday Mass, a crying evil of our times.
   f. Guard against such sinful omission; for,
      Experience shows it is hard to amend.

iii. *Annual Precept* of the Church: viz.
   a. Confession:
      1. Usually at Easter, as preparation for Communion.
      2. Binding all the Faithful, having attained the use of reason.
   b. Communion:
      1. Once a year, at Easter or thereabouts.
      2. Under pain of mortal sin; for,
      3. Unless we eat this Bread, we shall not have spiritual life: Jn. vi. 54.
   c. How many refuse even this to God!
      1. How can these hope to spend the year well?
      2. How look for the Sacraments in death, if they neglect them in life?

Resolutions:

i. To spend this year well, by taking these simple means.
ii. To season these with mortification and self-denial.
iii. To make thus our days full days, worthy of full reward.

138. THE HOLY NAME.

"His name shall be called Jesus." Lke. ii. 21.

i. In the Old Law, names were given on the eighth day after birth.
ii. Consider, on this eighth day of Our Lord's life, His sacred Name.

A Name:

i. In honouring a name we honour all it implies.
As in honouring the Crucifix, we honour Him who died on it.
ii. Two stand out prominently among all holy names:
a. Jehovah, in the Old Law:
1. Meaning Being of beings, Being on whom all depends.
2. Name used by Moses, as sanction of his mission: Ex. iii. 14.
3. Name of great awe and majesty.
α. The High Priest alone allowed to pronounce it, once a year.
β. The whole of the Old Law, a reign of fear and punishment.
4. But another period followed—the Law of grace and love.
Wherein we have the other name, viz.
b. Jesus, in the New Law.

Jesus:

i. Hebrew word meaning Saviour: Mth. i. 21.
ii. Others had borne this name, types of our divine Saviour: *e.g.*
Josue, or Jesus, saviour of his people: Ecclus. xlvi. 1.
Jesus, son of Sidrach: *Ibid.* l. 29.
iii. Our Lord fulfilled the office implied by this name: for,
a. He offered Himself to God, as victim for man's redemption.
b. The sacrifice of the Cross of infinite value before God; and

c. Of universal efficacy for all men:
1. In those preceding Him, through faith in a future Saviour.
2. In those following, by their living up to His teachings.

d. He thus saved and delivered His people from sin and hell.

iv. This holy name is one of:

a. Power: recalling Him by whom all things were made.
Cure of the lame man: Acts iii. 6.

b. Love:
1. Awakening gratitude for the author of salvation.
2. Arousing devotion to Our Saviour, still on the altar.

c. Victory: by it we may overcome all temptation.

v. To our souls, this name is as

a. Light:
1. Whence has the world the light of faith, but by the preaching of this name?
2. By it we come to the light of God's knowledge: 1 Pet. ii. 9.
3. Carried by missionaries into the darkness of paganism.

b. Food:
1. Giving strength to the soul, when lovingly dwelt on. *S. Bern.*
2. Inspiring the mind with chaste thoughts and pure affections.

c. Medicine:
1. Bringing comfort to the heart in sorrow.
2. Giving courage, amid trial and doubt.

Lessons;

i. Deep *respect* for this most holy Name: Phil. ii. 10.
a. Practice of bowing the head at it, indulgenced by Sixtus V.
b. Exact observance of the second commandment.

ii. Tender *love*, in ejaculations and prayer.

iii. *Confidence* in its power, in danger and trial.

iv. *Atonement*, for profanation of the Holy Name.

139. S. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY.

i. S. Thomas, the great martyr Saint of England.
ii. Patron of the English Clergy, for whom pray during this octave.
iii. Study something of his life, and draw practical lessons therefrom.

The Saint at Court:

i. Thomas a Beckett was born in London, A.D. 1117.
   a. Soon distinguished for his talent and virtue.
   b. At length, he studied at home and abroad for the priesthood.
ii. Appointed Chancellor of England by King Henry II. Here his integrity and amiability gained him universal esteem.
iii. The See of Canterbury becoming vacant, he was nominated thereto by the King.
   a. The Saint warned him that royal abuses would no longer be tolerated.
   b. Only when pressed by the Pope, did he accept the appointment, A.D. 1162.
iv. Amid the glory and splendour around him, Thomas
   a. Ever practised austerity and penance.
   b. Rose early for his daily devotions and study.
   c. Had most regular hours for his routine of work.
   d. Preached often, and without fear of the great.
v. Lessons:
   a. S. Thomas is an example of a truly mortified life, in high position.
   b. If we wish to convert England, we must study austerity and perfection.
      1. By these alone, can we gain power with God.
      2. Without them, we cannot hope to have power over men.
   c. The Archbishop's austerity, the secret of his wonderful influence.

In strife and death:

i. The Devil strove to sow discord between Archbishop and King.

ii. Causes of difference:
  a. The Saint's resignation of the Chancellorship.
  b. Chiefly: the King's usurping Church revenues.
  c. Resentment of the nobles, and their misrepresentations of the Saint.
iii. The King then in anger required him to sign the "Constitutions of Clarendon."
  a. Thomas at first refused, and resisted all threats.
  b. But at the entreaty of some of the Clergy, he yielded and signed, 1164.
  c. At once, however, seeing his fault, he retracted.
  d. Encouraged by Pope Alexander III. he now showed more zeal than ever.
iv. Hereupon, Henry declared the goods of the Saint and of his friends confiscated.
v. Consequent exile to France, where
  a. He met the Pope, who approved his conduct.
  b. He received a revelation in prayer of his future martyrdom.
vi. After seven years' absence, he returned to his See:
  a. Prepared for trial, by deepened love of the Cross.
  b. Perfectly resigned to God's will in his regard.
  c. Acclaimed with joy, by the whole people.
vii. Henry cursed all who favoured the Saint, and complained of his obstinacy.
  Four men, hearing this, planned his death.
viii. A few days after Christmas, the Saint was slain before the altar, 1170.

Lessons:

a. Never pare down the truth, even to effect conversions.
  Truth is not ours to abate; it is God's.
b. But ever adhere to high principles.
c. In high principles and truth, there is the plenitude of heavenly blessings.
d. Through these, with prayer, we may hope the conversion of England.
e. Pray to-day that the Blood of England's Martyr may avail!

140. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

"Arise . . . and fly into Egypt." Mth. ii. 13.

i. To-day's Gospel gives a chief occurrence of Our Lord's Infancy:
The Flight into Egypt, to escape the jealousy of Herod.

ii. Consider this event, and the lessons it may contain.
A fountain of poetry and art in the Church at large.

I. **The Command** of the Angel:

i. Humbling to Our Lord.
a. He is thus compelled to leave His own country.
b. Yet, He had come to be the Saviour of His people.
c. The Creator, fleeing before His own creature!

ii. Learn to form your ideas on those of God.
a. This command gave glory to His name: for,
The humiliations of His Son were the fulfilment of prophecy.
b. It was advantageous to man, because affording
1. *Instruction*, as to the ways of salvation.
2. *Consolation* in sorrow and disgrace.
3. *Courage* in persecution, which is never wanting.
4. *Admiration* for the wise dispositions of Providence.

II. **Command given to S. Joseph:**

i. What an honour bestowed on this "just man," thus made
a. The confidant of the secrets of God's Providence.
b. The instrument of divine authority.
Holding here below the place of the Eternal Father.

ii. How great also is the honour of the Catholic Priesthood:
Entrusted with the care of this same body of Jesus.

iii. Great too is the honour of the Faithful.
a. Permitted to care for dwelling-places of His sacramental presence.
b. Admitted even to receive Him into their hearts.

III. **The Command executed** by

i. *Jesus:*

a. Faithful (with full use of His faculties) to the Will of His Father.

b. This, the great lesson He was to teach later on.

"Thy will be done on earth." Mth. vi. 10.
"Not My will, but Thine be done." Lke. xxii. 42.
"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." Jn. iv. 34.

ii. *Mary:*

a. Though Mother of God, she was also spouse of S. Joseph.

b. Hence her prompt obedience to his intimation.

iii. *Joseph:*

a. Blind and ready compliance with the angel's word.

b. Without murmur, or argument as to other means of safety.

For God could have provided simpler means to this end.

c. Sacrificing love of peace and retirement, to fulfil the command.

iv. See Joseph and Mary preparing for the journey:

a. Without trouble or anxiety, as to

1. The difficulties of some 300 miles of travel:
   α. Arising from bandits, wild beasts, and bad roads.
   β. Without the means of locomotion we now possess.
2. Fatigue and weariness of the way.
3. Heat and cold, wind and rain, without shelter.

b. Calm and dignified, leaving all to God, who gave the command.

c. How worthy of each other! How worthy of their Child!

d. When shall we be worthy of them, by imitating them?

Lessons:

i. *Sympathy* with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.
ii. *Suffering* and trial, most effectual means of salvation.
iii. *Compassion* for the sorrows of others.
iv. Uncomplaining *obedience* to the decrees of Providence.

141. GIFTS OF THE MAGI.

"Gold, frankincense and myrrh." Mth. ii. 11.

i. Custom of Orientals to offer gifts, on visiting the great: *e.g.*
The sons of Jacob to Joseph: Gen. xliii. 11.
The Queen of Saba to Solomon: 2 Par. ix. 9.
ii. So the Wise Men, on going to Bethlehem.
iii. Consider these gifts, and their import.

I. They offer Gold:

i. The most precious of the metals:
Hence the most worthy to offer.
ii. Denoting the ROYALTY of Christ, as King of
a. Heaven, where He reigns.
b. Earth, which He created.
c. Souls, where He dwells by His grace.
iii. Typifying charity, love and almsdeeds.
The most pure gold before God.
iv. Proving most useful to the Holy Family, during their exile in Egypt.
v. Symbol also of the Vow of Poverty, in Religion.

II. They offer Incense:

i. Recognizing thereby the DIVINITY of Christ:
Incense has ever been offered to God.
ii. Typifying prayer and devotion:
The most fragrant incense at God's throne.
"Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight." Ps. cxl. 2.
iii. Symbol of the Vow of Obedience, more pleasing than sacrifice.

III. They offer Myrrh:

i. Denoting the HUMANITY of Christ:
The bodies of the dead were embalmed with myrrh.
ii. Typifying penance and mortification, because of its bitterness:
Which preserve our souls from the corruption of sin.

iii. Symbol of the Vow of Chastity, exercise of perpetual self-denial.

Our offerings of the same:

i. The Gold of CHARITY: *e.g.*
   a. Love of God, by
      1. Observance of His Law.
      2. Obedience to Superiors.
      3. Resignation to the Divine Will.
   b. Love of Neighbours in and for God: by
      1. Helping and pleasing.
      2. Avoiding pain and injury.
   c. Spiritual and corporal works of mercy.
   The homage of our *Good Works.*

ii. The Incense of PRAYER: *e.g.*
   a. Morning and evening devotions.
   b. Sacrifice and Sacraments.
   c. Purity of Intention.
   d. Beautifying the House of God.
   The homage of our *Souls.*

iii. The Myrrh of MORTIFICATION: *e.g.*
   a. Days of fasting and abstinence.
   b. Crosses, penances and self-denial.
   c. A source of perseverance.
   d. Procuring Sacraments for the dying, and prayers for the dead.
   The homage of our *Bodies.*

Lessons:

i. Go again in spirit, and with faith to Bethlehem: but,
ii. Go not empty-handed to your Saviour: Ex. xxiii. 15.
   a. Take Him mystical Gold, Incense and Myrrh.
   b. Give Him the homage of your Works, your Soul and your Body.
iii. Then will He be King of your whole being, for time and eternity.

142. PROPHECY AS TO CHRIST THE MESSIAH.

i The Gospel of to-day in its entirety tends to prove that Christ was the Messiah expected by the world.
ii. The Evangelist shows it by three facts, fulfilling three prophecies.

I. The transfer of Power:

i. *Jacob*, 2,000 years B.C. said the Messiah would come, only on the sceptre passing away from Juda.

"The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda . . . till He come that is to be sent." Gen. xlix. 10.

ii. Now the Evangelist declares the sceptre had passed away at Our Lord's birth: Mth. ii. 1.
iii. This Herod was appointed King of the Jews by the Romans, and named here
a. That the date of Our Lord's birth might be ascertained.
b. To show the clear fulfilment of the prophecy: for,
iv. The Jews had thus fallen under the yoke of the Roman Empire.
As they admitted, by their question about the tribute: Mth. xxii. 17.

II. The Star:

i. *Balaam*, 1,500 years B.C. said a wonderful star was to appear and announce the birth of the Messiah.

"A star shall arise out of Jacob." Numb. xxiv. 17.

ii. Now the Magi declared they had seen this expected star: Mth. ii. 2.
iii. All looked for the Redeemer to be designated by a star.
a. Produced on the very night of the Nativity.
b. Preceding the Magi, like the pillar of fire in the desert.
c. Shining both by day and night, as their guide.
d. Surpassing all others in splendour and beauty.

iv. Thus is a second prophecy fulfilled, pointing to the birth of Christ.

v. Admire the Wisdom of God, calling men so variously: *e.g.*

a. To-day, the Magi, by a star: they were astrologers.

b. Later, fishermen, by a miraculous draft of fishes: Lke. v.

c. The sick, by healing their diseases.

d. So, nowadays, God calls men to the Faith: *e.g.*

1. Through dissensions in their own Churches.
2. By the edifying life of some Catholic.
3. On the occasion of an intended marriage.
4. By study, reading, or especially prayer.
5. By some sermon, or course of instruction.

III. Bethlehem, the place of birth:

i. *Micheas*, 700 years B.C. had foretold the place:

> "Bethlehem . . . out of thee shall He come forth that is to be the ruler in Israel." Mich. v. 2.

ii. The Evangelist tells us that Our Lord was born in the royal city of David: Mth. ii. 1.

iii. All History likewise testifies to the fact: Pilgrimages thither, common in all ages.

iv. Thus does a third prophecy receive its fulfilment. As Our Lord Himself declares, He came not to destroy, but to fulfil: Mth. v. 17.

Lessons:

i. Bless God for giving such foundations to our Faith.

ii. Go to-day in spirit to your new-born Saviour.

iii. Carry with you the virtues represented by the Magi's gifts:

a. The Gold of *Charity*.

b. The Incense of *Prayer*.

c. The Myrrh of *Mortification*.

iv. Offering such gifts as these, you will receive blessings in return.

v. On this feast of Converts, pray for the spread of the Faith.

143. THE THREE DAYS' LOSS.

"They returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him." Lke. ii. 45.

i. Mary without Jesus! one of the greatest of her seven Dolours.

ii. Consider some of the points of this, her third Dolour.

History:

i. The Jews had to worship God thrice a year in Jerusalem.
   a. At the *Pasch*, commemorating their deliverance from Egypt.
   b. At *Pentecost*, recalling the Law given on Sina.
   c. At the *Feast of Tabernacles*, as harvest-thanksgiving.

ii. Jesus, 12 years old, went up to the Pasch with His parents.

iii. Their meritorious prayer in the Temple, and their works of mercy.

iv. Return of the multitudes, in separate companies: The men together; the women together; children with either.

v. At the first halting-place, they reunited.
   a. Then for the first time, Jesus was missed.
   b. Mary and Joseph each thought Him with the other.

vi. What anguish in their hearts at the discovery. Anxious enquiries, with no result, no sympathy.

vii. Immediate return to Jerusalem, and active search.
   a. Fears, as to treachery on the part of Archelaus.
   b. Doubts, whether Jesus may not have died.
   c. Interior darkness and desolation.

viii. Only after three days, do they find Him in the Temple.
   a. Admiration of doctors, at His wisdom.
   b. Attractions of His sweetness.

ix. Joy of Mary and Joseph, on seeing their Child again! They can now sympathize with those who suffer interior desolation.

Peculiarities:

i. Mary's greatest dolour:
   a. Separation from Jesus! she knew not why! nor where He was!

b. Intense spiritual darkness in her soul.
c. In the Burial, she knew she could look to the Resurrection.

ii. Dolour inflicted by Jesus Himself.
a. The first was through Simeon: the second, through Joseph.
b. While helping resignation, this deepened her pain.

iii. It enabled Mary to know the misery of souls losing Jesus by sin.
a. She was to be the Mother of Mercy, and the Refuge of Sinners.
b. She must therefore feel the loss of Jesus, though not through sin.
c. A motive of confidence, for sinners to have recourse to her.

Mary's Dispositions:

i. *Yearning* and anxious longing to find her Son.
ii. Yet perfect *resignation*, in the depth of her trial.
iii. Extreme *humility:*
a. Perfectly tranquil, despite the anguish.
b. Her unworthiness the cause, to her mind, of her loss of Jesus.
c. Her silence, at His reproof-like answer, when found: Lke. ii. 49.

Lessons for ourselves:

i. The loss of Jesus by sin, the greatest of evils.
a. Yet how little some feel it.
b. How happy they can be without Him!
ii. Such loss should be to us a most intense agony.
a. Everything must yield to our search for Him.
b. This search must be quiet and sorrowful, like Mary's.
iii. Resignation in times of dryness and trial.
iv. Let the presence of Jesus be our joy in time, in eternity.

Be Mary's dispositions our own, should Jesus be, or seem to be, far from us.

144. THE HIDDEN LIFE.

"He went down with them and came to Nazareth." Luke. ii. 51.

i. These words refer to the 18 years of Our Lord's life of obscurity.
ii. A life of retirement is the principle of spiritual activity.
iii. Each one should endeavour to have the *spirit* of it: No matter what his individual position in life may be.

The Hidden Life:

i. Our Lord had a stupendous work to do—to convert the world.
ii. He might have had riches, influence and power; or,
iii. He might have been an orator, a philosopher, or a poet. But,
iv. God though He was, He lived without such outward helps.
  a. Thirty of His thirty-three years were hidden from the world.
  b. Most of His years would seem as waste, to critics.
    What reformer would willingly so efface himself?
v. He went down to Nazareth:
  a. Not to Rome, where honours might await Him.
  b. Nor to Jerusalem, where He might influence the Jewish rulers.
  c. But, to Nazareth, in humble obscurity.
vi. There He chose
  a. *Subjection*, even to His own creatures.
  b. *Labour*, for hands that created all things: Ps. xciv. 5.
  c. *Poverty*, real want and insufficiency.
  d. *Solitude*, away from the notice and applause of the world.
vii. These conditions of sanctification we can imitate: *e.g.*
  a. *Subjection* to others:
    1. Rejoicing in it, for its own sake.
    2. Obedience of some kind, necessary for perfection.

b. Labour:
1. Humble toil and hardship.
2. Whatever of this kind may come in our way.

c. Poverty:
1. If really poor, love the state, and be content.
2. If not actually so, be so by detachment and generosity.

d. Solitude:
1. Not seeking the company of the great and rich.
2. Not yearning to be talked of and known.

Corollary: The Hidden Life means

i. Not, idleness and empty silence:
ii. But, intense activity of spirit, and continuous union with God.
iii. Simplicity of view, and trust in God.
iv. Absence of ambition for position and power.
v. Absence of vainglory, jealousy, anxiety as to results.
vi. Watchfulness over self, against tepidity and laxity.
vii. Prayer, as a predominant part of our lives.
viii. External occupation not incompatible with it:
If only we be indifferent to the kind and amount of work.

Lessons:

i. Keep the example of the Home of Nazareth before you.
ii. Even in the world, we may imitate the Hidden Life: by
a. Seeking God's will in all things.
b. Holy indifference.
c. Elevation of heart.
d. Loving worship of God.
iii. This loving worship, the only state for which the soul is made.
This it is that sanctifies, and gives success.
iv. In these busy days, retirement is not easy.
Yet the true disciple of Christ will endeavour to seek it sometimes.

145. MIXED MARRIAGES.

"There was a marriage in Cana." Jn. ii. 1.

i. Take occasion to speak on mixed marriages:
ii. Our Lord would hardly honour such by His presence!

Catholic Marriage:

i. By making marriage a sacrament, Our Lord sanctified the affections of the heart.
ii. The marriage union is emblematic of Christ's union with His Church.
   a. Husband and wife must love each other, as Christ and the Church do.
   b. The husband must imitate the care and self-sacrifice of Christ.
   c. The wife must repay this loving care with gratitude.
   d. As the Church turns to Christ in difficulty, so the wife to her husband.
iii. Such union of hearts makes home here a figure of the home in Heaven.
iv. The Church rejoices to bring a Catholic couple to the altar, for nuptial mass and blessing.
v. She promotes Catholic marriages, for temporal and eternal happiness.

Mixed Marriage:

i. Always held in detestation by that same Church.
ii. For two reasons chiefly:
   a. Mixed marriages are often unhappy:
      1. Even Catholic marriages sometimes so!
      2. Will man and wife be happier, if bound to differ in Religion?
      3. In the happiest marriages, trials exist. Where find comfort and strength, except before the same altar?
      4. Differences of opinion tend to cool the affections:
         How much more, differences in Religion?
      5. Thus of their nature mixed marriages tend to unhappiness.

b. Mixed marriages tend to destroy the faith.
1. Suppose the wife Catholic:
a. The pledged promises of the husband are often broken.
β. A word of honour is a slender reed whereon to risk eternity!
γ. Children may then be reared in a false religion.
2. Suppose the children are Catholic: even so,
a. How revere the father as representing God, when he professes a faith displeasing God!
β. They must not speak to him on Religion.
γ. If he be in earnest, he may unconsciously influence them.
δ. Thus they may come to indifference.
3. Suppose the wife Protestant:
a. A mother's influence has no equal.
β. Her privilege, to teach her child its first prayer.
γ. If she be a Protestant, God's plans are thwarted, even though the children be Catholic: for,
1. The husband may have to be often away.
2. A third party's help will never equal a mother's power.
δ. At length, the children enter the world, and many stray away.
One of the curses of mixed marriages.

iii. If such evils always resulted, mixed marriages would always be prohibited.

Lessons:

i. Duty of parents to warn children against mixed marriages.
ii. Guard against them, by avoiding company-keeping with non-Catholics.
iii. Look on a true Catholic home, as the height of human happiness.

146. INDISSOLUBILITY OF MARRIAGE.

"Jesus also was invited to the marriage." In. ii. 2.

i. Whenever our Lord may have made marriage a sacrament, He made it indissoluble.

ii. Consider this point, nowadays so much denied. Even Catholics sometimes have only vague ideas on the subject.

Marriage Indissoluble: as shown

i. From *Scripture: e.g.*

"What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Mth. xix. 6.

"Everyone that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery." Lke. xvi. 18.

ii. By *Tradition:*

a. The Sovereign Pontiffs in all ages.*

b. Fathers, Synods and Councils of the Church.

c. The Council of Trent: *Sess. xxiv. c. 7.*

iii. From *Reason:*

a. Marriage represents the union of Christ with His Church: Eph. v.
But this union is indissoluble.

b. Consider the ends of marriage:

1. The propagation of the human race:
   - α. Not in passion, as among brute animals:
   - β. But in reason, and with knowledge of responsibility.
2. Support and education of children:
   - α. Though most animals require little care from the male parent, man requires it from both, for support and training.
   - β. The young of animals can soon fend for themselves, but children need care for many long years.
   - γ. If the marriage-bond could be severed,
     1. This care would soon cease.
     2. Children would be neglected and disowned.
     3. Misery and sin would spread apace.

δ. Father and mother must therefore remain united.

3. Mutual help and support:

"It is not good for man to be alone." Gen. ii. 18.

α. This help the indissolubility tends to secure.

1. Making the married couple enter into everything that can promote their common welfare.
2. Fixing their affections on their common interests.
3. Giving permanency to their mutual love.
4. Helping them to bear their crosses and trials.

β. Remove this indissolubility, and marriage becomes concubinage, with all its attendant evils.

b. The welfare of States demands it:

1. Without it, dissensions and quarrels and misery in Society.
2. Public morality weakened by the publicity and revelations of divorce cases.

Divorce;

i. Permitted now by most States, despite the divine prohibition.
328,000 divorces in the United States in 20 years!

ii. Encourages crime and sin, as a means to freedom.

iii. Disturbs the peace and happiness of families, hence of Society.

iv. One of the leading causes of the downfall of the Roman Empire.
"History repeats itself:" let Society therefore beware!

v. At all costs, oppose such doctrine, in theory and in practice.

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* Though Pope Clement VII. could foresee the terrible results of his refusing to Henry VIII. the dissolution of his marriage, he remained firm and faithful to his trust, despite all the threats and entreaties of the King.

147. THE LEPROSY OF SIN.

"Behold a leper came and adored Him." Mth. viii. 2.

i. Bodily diseases often typical of diseases of the soul.
ii. Corporal leprosy, of the spiritual leprosy of sin.
iii. What the leper did to be cured, we must do for pardon of sin.
iv. Consider therefore two points: viz.

I. Unhappy state of sinners:

i. Lepers much to be pitied:
   a. Their disease contagious and very disfiguring.
   b. Destroying health and oftentimes life even.
   c. Driving its victim from the society of its fellow-beings.
      Even Miriam not excepted: Numb. xii. 15.
   d. Isaias takes it as best typifying Our Lord's condition: liii. 4.
ii. Sinners still more to be pitied.
   a. A soul in mortal sin most frightful to contemplate.*

      "All her beauty is departed." Lam. i. 6.

      1. Deprived of the gifts and adornments of grace.
      2. A very sink of abomination before God.
   b. Sin deprives the soul of the friendship of God and the Saints.

      "I will cast them forth out of My house." Osee ix. 15.

   c. Sin renders the soul restless and uneasy.

      "There is no peace to the wicked." Is. lvii. 21.

   d. Unless repented of, it plunges the soul into eternal death.†
   e. What more deplorable! Yet how many live on in sin!
      How differently would they act, did they suffer from the bodily disease.

II. Means of rising from this state:

i. The leper in the Gospel
a. Addressed himself to Our Saviour:

"Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." Mth. viii. 2.

b. He was directed to the priests;
c. And commanded to offer gifts.

ii. Similarly, the sinner also must
a. Have recourse to God:
In prayer, fervent, humble and confident.
b. Seek the priest, empowered to pardon.
By true contrition and good confession.
c. Offer gifts—a good resolution
1. To atone for past sin.
2. To avoid occasions of sin for the future.
d. Thus will sin be cleansed, and a reconciliation effected.
How different is corporal leprosy, for which there is no remedy.

Lessons:

i. Hate mortal sin, as the greatest of evils.
ii. Avoid this spiritual leprosy at any cost:
a. By prayer for strength against it.
b. By avoiding the occasions that lead to it.
c. By considering the evil of sin, in time and eternity.
d. By remembering the all-seeing eye of God!
iii. Should such leprosy ever taint your soul, hasten to the cleansing bath of Penance.
iv. Be grateful to God, for putting such a remedy within your reach.

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* A Saint, once permitted by Almighty God to see, in some mysterious way, the state of a soul in mortal sin, declared she would have died at the sight, had not God, by His special power, preserved her life.

+ It is usual for each one to be buried in the place to which he belongs; the Devil therefore, claiming his strict rights, will not allow the soul in sin to escape being buried in Hell.

148. THE ADVANTAGES OF FAITH.

"As thou hast belived, so be it done to thee." Mth. viii. 13.

i. The Centurion by his faith obtained the cure of his servant.

ii. Faith will heal the spiritual diseases of our souls: it cures

a. *Darkness* of the Intellect, teaching us the truths of Revelation.

b. *Corruption* of the Heart, instructing us in all the virtues.

c. *Attachment* to creatures, teaching us patience and resignation.

I. Darkness of the Mind:

i. The Intellect of man darkened by the Fall.

ii. Men without faith, as sheep without a shepherd.

"Carried about with every wind of doctrine." Eph. iv. 14.

iii. We with faith are on the rock of God's Church, safe from error.

a. Guided by pastors, to whom Christ said:

"He that heareth you heareth Me." Lke. x. 16.

b. From Him we learn infallibly the truths of Revelation.

c. The mind is thus truly enlightened again.

iv. If we consider the benefits of Faith, gratitude becomes a duty.

A duty too often neglected amongst us.

II. Corruption of the Heart:

i. The Heart also wounded in the Fall.

a. Affections turned from God to creatures.

b. Hankering after evil rather than good.

ii. Faith helps to cure this corruption, as seen in

a. Examples, for admiration, if not imitation:

S. Paul, the first hermit: Jan. 15.
S. Ignatius: July 31.
S. Francis Xavier: Dec. 3.
Saints in every rank of life.

b. Examples of the just, proving their faith by works:
The Christian Brothers.
The Sisters of Mercy, of Charity, etc.

iii. What makes poor laws and workhouses unnecessary or necessary?
Lively faith, or the lack of it.

iv. What leads men to frequent the Sacraments?
Faith, telling them therein is their safety.

v. What raised the Saints to the heights of perfection?
Faith, which thus cures the corruption of the Heart.

vi. As with them, so with us, Faith will strengthen our hearts against passion.

III. The miseries of Life:

i. The Body likewise injured by the Fall: *e.g.*
Labour, sickness, want and death.

ii. Faith gives comfort in their midst, teaching sufferings to be:
a. Punishments of sin.
Therefore, to be borne in the spirit of reparation.
b. Trials, to detach our hearts from earth.
Therefore, to be received in the spirit of resignation.
c. Means, enabling us to resemble Our Lord.
Therefore, to be accepted as graces, with gratitude.
d. Opportunities given of meriting.
Therefore, to be seized, to increase our future reward.

iii. Thus will Faith help to lighten the ills of life.
Entitling us to "an eternal weight of glory" hereafter: 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Lessons:

i. Take the means to strengthen your Faith.
Prayer, instruction, good books.

ii. Avoid all dangers to it:
Pride, worldliness, mixed marriages, godless education.

iii. Pray for its spread to others.

149. THE STORM, A TYPE.

"A great tempest arose in the sea." Mth. viii. 24.

i. Scripture often represents life as a stormy ocean.
ii. The ship, in to-day's Gospel, is a type of
  a. The *Church*, amid persecutions and scandals.
  b. The *Soul*, in temptation and trial.

I. The Church:

i. Persecution in some form, ever the lot of the Church: *e.g.*
  a. The ten great persecutions, under the Roman Emperors.
  b. Persecution in pagan lands still:
    In China, Africa, etc.
  c. Opposition and oppression in civilized lands:
    As in Italy and France, at the present day.
  d. Captivity or exile of the Head of the Church.
ii. Scandals in the Church:
  a. Fall of even an Apostle.
  b. Heresies and Schisms:
    Arianism, condemned A.D. 325.
    The Iconoclasts, 8th c.
    Schism in England, 16th c.
  c. Dissensions, disputes, etc.
iii. Recourse to God, as with the Apostles to Our Lord.
  a. Fervent prayer: "Lord, save us."
    Leo XIII. on prayer in the Church's trials.
  b. Faith and Confidence in God who overrules all.
    His promise to be ever with the Church: Mth. xxviii. 20.
  c. Good lives in Catholics, showing forth the truth of Religion.

II. The Soul:

i. Individual souls tempted to sin:
  a. Against *God:* pride, irreligion.
  b. Against *Neighbours:* injustice of any kind.
  c. Against *Self:* sensuality, idleness.

ii. Each one has trials of the temporal order also:
  a. Poverty, sickness, deaths.
  b. Persecution from neighbours.
iii. Act then, as sailors in a storm:
  a. They reef the sails, lest the winds overpower them.
    1. Curb the love of pleasure.
    2. Mortify the senses.
    3. Otherwise the soul will sink into sin, perhaps into Hell!
  b. They make for the high seas:
    1. Avoid the world and its pleasures.
    2. Soar aloft in prayer.
  c. They throw goods overboard, to lighten the vessel.
    1. Cast forth sin in humble confession.
    2. Sailors regret their loss, yet safety is the first consideration.
    3. So we, with sin and its occasions, must gain salvation at any cost.
  d. Remember that all things work for good, if we love God: Rom. viii. 28.

Lessons:

i. In the public trials of the Church, have recourse to prayer.
  Though His ways seem slow, God's Providence is ever watchful.
ii. So also in the private crosses of each one.
iii. Perseverance in prayer pleasing to God, and essential.
iv. Human passions cause turmoil in the soul.
  a. Our Lord may seem to sleep, because of our tepidity.
  b. Call on Him—by Prayer, Penance, Almsdeeds.
v. Rejoice, amid the storms in your soul, as being thought worthy to suffer for God: Acts v. 41.

150. THE PASSIONS.

"A great tempest arose." Mth. viii. 24.

i. A storm at sea, one of the figures of the passions of the soul.

ii. As the passions become sources of sin, consider three points.

The evil passions:

i. Included under three heads chiefly: 1 Jn. ii. 16.
   a. The concupiscence of the eyes: love of riches.
   b. The concupiscence of the flesh: love of pleasure.
   c. The pride of life: love of honours.

ii. Incitements to the passions:
   a. Objects acting on the senses or the imagination.
   b. Fuel supplied by reading, self-indulgence, etc.
   c. Idleness: Ecclus. xxxiii. 29.
   d. Want of self-restraint.

iii. Figured by the winds, a raging fire, an unruly horse.

Why to be subdued?

i. As useful and necessary, as the breaking in of a horse.

ii. We must avoid sin, and therefore overcome its causes.

iii. Holy Scripture warns us:

"Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will." Ecclus. xviii. 30.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." Mth. xvi. 24.

iv. Examples and teaching of the Saints:

"Conquer thyself." *S. Ignatius.*

"The greater violence thou offerest to thyself, the greater the progress thou wilt make." *Imitation.*

v. Unless subdued themselves, they enslave the soul, as typified by

The brothers of Joseph, yielding to their envy: Gen. xlii.

The prodigal son: Lke. xv.

Nabuchodonosor, become as an animal in the fields: Dan. iv. 30.

vi. They darken the mind, and disturb the heart.

vii. They cause many mistakes and much misery, both for time and eternity.

viii. Subjection to the passions is a kind of idolatry.

Antiochus and the idol in the Temple: 1 Mach. i. 57.

ix. To subdue the passions is a glory.

"He that ruleth his spirit (is better) than he that taketh cities." Prov. xvi. 32.

x. Whoso subdues them is truly free.

How to be subdued?

i. Never despair of victory.

There are no passions so violent, that they cannot be overcome.

ii. Don't complain of their violence.

You are stronger than they, if only you will fight them.

iii. You must wage war against them:

a. With determination.

b. Attacking the predominant passion first.*

c. With perseverance.†

d. Without discouragement, even should you fall.

e. With confidence in God.

"I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." Phil. iv. 13.

f. Taking the necessary means:

Prayer, watchfulness, penance, etc.

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* Few subjects can be more interesting than that of the ruling passion, for no obstacle to progress is more common, or more secret, and therefore none more dangerous. There can be no true progress, until an active war is being waged against it.—*Faber*.

† Said the Abbot Theodore to a young monk: "You complain that you are fighting now for eight years! Behold I am eighty years of age, and am fighting still!"

151. WHEAT AND COCKLE.

A type of the Kingdom of God.
i. In His Church upon Earth; and,
ii. In the individual souls of men.

I. The Kingdom of God in the Church.

i. *Wheat* represents
  a. The good in the Church.
  b. Souls striving after perfection.
  c. Those even content to obey the commandments.

ii. Why so many wicked in the Church?
  a. Men naturally prone to evil, and many resist not their passions.
  b. Mere membership will not save us; for,
  c. Neither God nor His Church will violate our free-will.

> "God, who created us without our co-operation, will not save us without it." *S. Aug.*

iii. *Cockle* represents the wicked of two classes:
  a. Bad careless members in the Church, and
  b. Those in bad faith outside the Church, especially
  c. Heresiarchs and their guilty followers: *e.g.*
    Arius, on the divinity of Our Lord: 4th c.
    Nestorius, on the divine motherhood of Mary: 5th c.
    Luther, on justification, etc.: 16th c.

> "An enemy hath done this."

iv. The two remain together,
  a. That the wicked may repent and amend.
    Otherwise they will be cast forth, children of the Church though they be.
  b. To exercise the patience of the good, and increase their merit.
  c. To lead the good to pray for their conversion.
  d. To make the good examples here, and witnesses hereafter to the wicked.
  e. To show God's power, in preserving the good among them.

II. The Kingdom of God in the Soul.

i. *Wheat* represents
- *a.* Good seed in the soul, through the light of Truth.
- *b.* The grace of the Sacraments, especially Holy Eucharist.
- *c.* The example of the Saints and holy persons.

ii. Where is the fruit of such seed within us? *e.g.*
- *a.* Lively faith, after Revelation?
- *b.* The virtues of Obedience, Purity, Patience, Humility?
- *c.* The good works of mercy?

Perhaps wanting, through cockle oversown!

iii. *Cockle* comes from
- *a.* Bad thoughts and desires.
- *b.* Want of watchfulness, as with a negligent gardener.
- *c.* Evil company and bad books.
- *d.* Contempt of smaller sins.
- *e.* Want of mortification.

iv. The two remain together,
- *a.* To keep us humble.

We should soon be proud, if we had no imperfections.
- *b.* To make us labour in overcoming the evil.
- *c.* To become a source of merit, through our constant warfare.

Lessons:

i. Thank God for the seed He has sown in the *Church*.
- *a.* Pray for its spread and increase.
- *b.* Intercede for the conversion of the wicked.

ii. Thank God for His graces to your own *Soul*.
- *a.* Resolve to bring forth fruit from the good seed.
- *b.* Weed out the cockle of evil passion and inclinations.

iii. God will some day separate the cockle from the wheat!

152. BAD COMPANY.

"An enemy hath done this." Mth. xiii. 28.

i. Our Lord Himself explains to-day's parable (vv. 37—43).

ii. Consider one practical point of it—the question of evil company.

Typified by the cockle among the wheat.

Bad Company:

i. Cockle is injurious to good seed, and prevents it yielding abundant fruit.

ii. See here the pernicious influence of evil companions, who

a. By their conversation and example, tend to lead us to sin; and

b. Prevent the seeds of virtue coming to perfection in the soul.

iii. Such evil company we are bound to avoid:

a. God Himself commands it:

"If sinners shall entice thee . . . walk not thou with them." Prov. i. 10, 15.

"Withdraw yourselves from every brother walking disorderly." 2 Thess. iii. 6.

"If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out." Mth. v. 29.

"If thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off." *Ibid.* 30.

1. What more useful or necessary than hand or eye!

2. Yet even they must yield to the soul's weal.

b. Reason itself suggests it: for,

1. To make alliance with God's enemies is to offend Him.

2. Now those who lead us to sin are clearly His enemies.

c. The welfare of Religion requires it: for,

1. To be known as keeping evil company is to give scandal.

2. The effects of this are as pernicious as those of bad company!

d. The interests of our soul demand it:

1. Salvation may depend greatly on the company we keep.

"Evil communications corrupt good manners." 1 Cor. xv. 33.

2. Experience shows how quickly we resemble those we go with.
One rotten apple will destroy all others in contact with it.
3. Many a soul now in Hell owes its damnation to bad companions.

iv. Hence the necessity of shunning evil company:
a. This applies especially to the young and inexperienced.
b. Responsibility in parents, as to their children's companions.
The Bishop's Charge.*

v. If it be sometimes impossible to escape such company,
a. Fortify yourself by vigilance and prayer.
b. Mistrust yourself, placing your confidence in God.
c. Do not expose yourself unnecessarily, or you cannot expect divine help: for,
"He that loveth danger shall perish in it." Ecclus. iii. 27.
Example of S. Peter: Mth. xxvi. 70.
d. Try even to work their conversion.
By good example, a well timed word, and prayer.

vi. Wicked companions are worse than the soldiers of Herod: Mth. ii. 16.
a. The latter took only the corporal life of the Innocents.
The former destroy the spiritual life of souls.
b. The soldiers acted openly, and in the light of day.
Evil companions work secretly and cautiously.
c. The soldiers obeyed the commands of Herod.
Evil companions obey the Devil and their own passions.

Lessons:

i. Consider well the almost irreparable evils of bad company.
ii. Therefore avoid it, as you would an infectious disease.
iii. Let parents and others remember their responsibility herein.

* A young man whom S. John the Evangelist had entrusted to the care of a bishop, to be trained in Christian virtue, through the evil companions he fell in with, became, not only a robber like themselves, but even the chieftain of the gang.—*Eusebius.*

153. PARABLES.

"Without parables, He did not speak to them." Mth. xiii. 34.

i. A wise teacher will take the most effective means to instruct.

ii. The parable is a common and popular mode of conveying instruction.

iii. Hence its frequent use by Our Lord.

Parables:

i. Stories founded on incidents in the natural order, under cover of which, truths of the supernatural order are taught.

ii. Common with the Ancients, under the name of Fables: *e.g.*

The Sun and the Wind: to teach the value of gentleness.

The Lion and the Mouse: to show our dependence on small things.

iii. Used also by the prophets: *e.g.*

The rich man and the Lamb: to show David his crime: 2 Kgs. xii.

The Vine and the bad Fruit: to remind the Jews of their faithlessness: Is. v.

iv. Frequently employed by Our Lord: (the Gospels give thirty-one).

a. That the truth might not become an occasion of blasphemy to the Jews.

As later He forbade the Church to cast pearls before swine: Mth. vii. 6.

b. To convey heavenly lessons to minds well-disposed.

The outward comparison containing a deep mystery.*

c. To conceal His mysteries from those wanting in faith: Mth. xiii. 13.

d. To fulfil the prophecy spoken of Him: Ps. lxxvii. 2.

v. Enable men, aided by faith, to learn supernatural truths.

a. As through a glass and in a dark manner.

b. Yet sufficiently for the good of their souls.

c. While the senses could not otherwise take cognizance of them.

vi. Spiritual blindness often results from trying to fathom mysteries by mere reason only.
  a. Like the Jews in their disbelief in Christ, despite His miracles: Jn. xii. 37.
  b. As corporal blindness results from gazing at the noonday sun.
  c. Utter disbelief of the most sacred truths follows such blindness.
vii. Were often prophecies by Our Lord, and themselves foretold of old: Ps. lxxvii. 2.
  a. Showing a marvellous agreement between Old and New Testaments.
  b. Proving Religion to be the work of God, embracing all ages.
  c. Showing that the events predicted by them are not the effects of mere chance.

Examples of Our Lord's Parables:

The Mustard seed: to foreshadow the future Church: Mth. xiii.
The Sower: to teach the need of worthily hearing the Word: Lke. viii.
The Lost Sheep: to inculcate humility and hope in the repentant: Lke. xv.
The Prodigal Son: to show God's pleasure at our repentance: *Ibid.*
The Ten Virgins: to remind us to be ever ready for death: Mth. xxv.

Lessons:

i. As with the Jews, so with us, God speaks according to the disposition of our hearts.
The humble, not the learned, will better hear Him.
ii. Purify the heart, and God will speak all that is necessary.
iii. Ever listen with humility and attention to the explanation of God's word.
It will then produce fruit in the soul: Is. lv. 11.

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* Comparisons are made unto earthly things, that from what the mind does know, it may rise to that which it does not; that from the image of things seen, it may soar aloft to those that are unseen. —*S. Gregory.*

154. THE MUSTARD SEED A TWO-FOLD TYPE.

The Mustard Seed:

i. The smallest of seeds, as spoken of in popular language.
   Though, absolutely, there are others smaller, like the poppy.
ii. Yet it grows, in Palestine, to the size of a large shrub.
   So that the very birds may rest on the branches thereof.
iii. Bitter to the taste.
iv. To give forth its pungency, it requires bruising.
v. Serves as condiment to food.

Type of Christ:

i. He was obscure in birth, and humbled in death.
   "A worm and no man, the reproach of men." Ps. xxi. 7.
ii. Yet how truly great He became in glory and power, by
   a. Preaching the doctrines of the Gospel.
   b. Practising the counsels of perfection.
   c. Instituting Sacraments and Sacrifice.
   d. Many miracles and good works.
   e. The example of all holiness.
iii. Often bitter in practice are His doctrines and counsels.
   Because so opposed to our natural inclinations.
iv. Especially when crushed in His Passion and Death, did Our Lord prove His power by a glorious Resurrection.
v. In the Holy Eucharist.
   a. He enflames souls with the fire of His love,
   b. Helps to sweeten the bitterness of the trials of life; and,
   c. Gives courage to face every danger for conscience.

Type of the Church:

i. Small and insignificant at Pentecost, in
  a. The number and rank of her first members.
    A few fishermen and converts from the people.
  b. The humility of her faith and teaching.
  c. The meekness of her maxims and practices.
  d. The contempt and persecutions of men.
ii. Yet has she grown to a great tree—truly catholic.*
  a. Extending her branches to every country on the globe.
    1. In numberless dioceses and provinces.
    2. In religious orders and institutes.
  b. Receiving within her bosom
    1. The nations and tribes of the earth.
    2. The greatest minds submitting to her teaching.
    3. The most powerful monarchs owning her sway.
      Saints in every age and clime.
iii. Like her Founder, bitter to flesh and blood in her practices: *e.g.*
  In the laws of fasting and abstinence.
iv. Oft oppressed by persecution and opposition.
  a. Yet never destroyed, because from God's hand.
  b. But showing the greater vitality by her triumph.
v. The teachings of the Church duly followed sweeten the trials of life and impart courage to bear them.

Lessons:

i. Be as the mustard seed, by humility and obedience.
ii. Fidelity to a simple grace will obtain others more precious.
  Producing eminent sanctity here, eternal greatness hereafter.

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* The magnificent organization of the Church to-day was truly contained, at least in germ, in the infant Church of Pentecost, as much so as are the leaves and branches of the mustard shrub within the smallest of seeds, and as truly as the oak, with its widespreading branches, is contained in the acorn.—*Duke.*

155. THE CALL TO GOD'S SERVICE.

"He sent them into His vineyard." Mth. xx. 2.

i. The householder is God and Our Lord Jesus Christ
   a. His family is the whole human race.
   b. Christians especially are His beloved children.
ii. See how all are called to serve Him.

All sent to the vineyard:

i. By Baptism, early in life, wherein we receive
   a. Sanctifying grace.
   b. The true faith.
   c. Adoption, as sons of God.
   d. A place and work in His vineyard.
ii. By Pastors in later years:
   Who instruct and guide, warn and reprove.
iii. By conversion to the Faith in after-life.
   Special grace of God, singling out individual souls.
iv. By reminders throughout life: *e.g.*
   Inspiration, missions, good books, etc.
v. Thus calls and graces come both early and late:
   a. Have we obeyed them?
   b. May it perhaps be said to us: "Why stand you idle?"
vi. We must not reply: "We are not hired." For,
   God has never ceased to call us (above).
vii. We must not say: "Temporals occupy us;" for,
   a. Only in death will temporal cares ever cease.
   b. In any case, temporal welfare must yield to the eternal: Mth. xvi. 26.
viii. This is possibly "the eleventh hour" for some now present!
   a. This Septuagesima instruction may be a last grace.

b. Hence, beware of abusing it.

"To-day, if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Ps. xciv. 8.

c. On the contrary, labour the more to make sure your election: 2 Pet. i. 10. For,

Many are called, but few chosen:

i. Fearful declaration of a loving Saviour.
Yet an effect of His love, to warn us.

ii. Not surprising, when we consider the lives of men
a. The spirit of the world rather than of Christ.
b. The love of pleasure rather than of penance.
c. The love of riches rather than of poverty.
d. The love of honours rather than of humility.
1. Such the spirit of the bulk of mankind.
2. Wherefore few only can be chosen.

iii. A serious thought to dwell on at this penitential time.
Reflection of S. Chrysostom in his Cathedral.*

Lessons:

i. Ponder well the words: "few are chosen."

ii. If God made here the separation of goats and sheep, on which side should *we* be placed?

iii. If a voice from Heaven now assured us that even one here present would be lost, who would not tremble?

iv. Strive to avoid condemnation, by corresponding to the call you have received.

v. The time for repentance and pardon is now at hand.

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* These walls contain within them a number of Catholics. You have been all purified in the sacrament of Baptism: you all join in the same worship, offer the same Sacrifice and receive the same Sacraments: you are all called! but will you be all chosen? we cannot tell! This only we know, that the number of the elect will be the smaller number, for Christ Himself has declared few only are chosen.—*S. John Chrys.*

156. THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF GOD'S GIFTS.

i. To-day's Gospel contains one of Our Lord's many parables.
ii. One of the lessons it teaches is as to the unequal distribution of God's gifts to men.

Every one a penny:

i. The *Penny* means the total reward God bestows.
It is the same for all, as the soul is one, and Heaven is one—viz. Himself.
ii. This reward results from a greater or lesser generosity;
The late comers working harder, though for a shorter time.
iii. The *householder* is God Himself, bestowing gifts unequally: *e.g.*
a. On some, health and advantages of body.
b. On others, intelligence and qualities of mind.
c. On these, honours and riches.
d. On those, graces and virtues.
e. Of some He requires long years of work and service.
f. Of others, but a day, or even an hour.
To all He gives freely, for He owes nothing to any.
iv. Such inequalities give rise to murmurs: *e.g.*
a. The poor envy the rich.
b. The less endowed, those that are more so.
c. Even sinners rage at the favours God shows to His servants. But,
v. To all God replies He is free to act as He pleases:
"Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will?" Mth. xx. 15.
"Is thy eye evil, because I am good?" *Ibid.*
a. Reply graven on the reason of each one: for,
b. God is bound to give
1. To each one here the means of salvation.
2. To all hereafter rewards according to their merits: Apoc. xxii. 12.

vi. So, some say to priests: "You don't treat all alike!" Usually, the words of a jealous and envious disposition.
  a. Do *you* treat all alike? *e.g.*
    1. A lady, and a woman in rags at the door?
    2. A friend and a stranger?
  b. *Can* you treat all alike?
    1. Treat all with charity and consideration; but,
    2. In other things, it is impossible, and is not expected.
  c. Does God Himself treat all alike?
    1. It is of faith, that He gives to all the means of salvation. But,
    2. In other things, He does not treat all equally, nor is He bound to.
    3. So will a priest act, as to Sacraments, Instruction and essentials.
    In other things, he may act as prudence may suggest.

First and Last: this thought is
i. A powerful stimulus to both:
  a. The *First*, lest through indifference, they be outstripped.
  b. The *Last*, lest they give way to discouragement.
ii. A motive for humility, to
  a. The *First*, that having begun early, they have made so little progress.
  b. The *Last*, that having begun so recently, they are already so tepid.
iii. A reason for despising no one; for,
  a. This new penitent is perhaps more fervent than I.
  b. This sinner may be converted sooner than I.
  c. I may yet fall, deny the faith, and be lost!

Lessons:
i. Be grateful for God's gifts, of whatever kind.
ii. Murmur not, if others have received more than you. With their greater gifts, they have greater responsibility: Lke. xii. 48.
iii. Make the best use of the graces you *have* received, great or small.
iv. You are certainly of those that are called: Will you be of those that are chosen!

157. HEARERS OF THE WORD.

"The seed is the Word of God." Lke. viii. 11.

i. People often speak of the need of good preachers.
ii. How seldom, of the need of good hearers!
Yet these are essential, if preaching is to do good.
iii. Consider some classes of hearers of the Word: for
The Word of God is a seed, which requires congenial soil for its growth.

I. **Attendance** at instructions:

i. A first essential, if sermons are to be beneficial.
a. Yet how many, young especially, neglect it—persistently.
b. How many seem to think it unnecessary—for them.
c. But religious instruction is necessary for all.
In this, as in profane learning, intellect and memory weaken.
ii. Priests are bound to preach and instruct:
Implying the corresponding duty of the Faithful to hear.
iii. All therefore are urged to earnest and regular attendance.
The present time, most appropriate for such resolution.
iv. Except in such spirit, the holy season will pass unprofitably.

II. **Classes of hearers:**

i. The *Vacant* Hearer:
a. The Word of God is weighty truth, concerning
1. The nature of God and the Soul.
2. The various mysteries of faith.
3. Our duties; our future destiny, etc.
b. This Word therefore requires attention and thought.
c. Yet many are distracted, or asleep, present only in body.
d. Divine truths cannot rouse the heart, unless they enter the mind.

c. They fall on the Vacant Hearer, like the seed on the wayside.
The Devil takes the Word away by distractions, lest they believe.

ii. The *Curious* Hearer:
a. Gives attention, but only to criticize:
The subject, the treatment, or the language:
b. Resembles those who tried to ensnare Our Lord in His speech: Lke. xi. 54.
c. Applies sermons to his neighbours:
1. Unprofitable to himself, and uncharitable to them.
2. Food is thus offered him, but refused.
d. The Curé of Ars a most simple, yet most successful preacher.

iii. The *Prayerless* Hearer:
a. Appearances of piety may exist alongside tepidity.
b. The heart in such cases is little moved, if at all.
1. No profit is derived, without the dew of grace through prayer.
2. The Word falls like the seed on the rock without moisture.
3. Hence, sermon after sermon leaves it as before.
c. The Spirit of God alone can truly influence the heart.
d. Hence, always some prayer before instruction.
The old woman and the Preacher.*

Lessons:

i. No longer shirk Church services and instruction.
ii. If hitherto, careless hearers of the Word, resolve now to amend.
iii. Come determined to profit by each instruction.
With humility, eagerness to learn, and determination to do.
iv. Then will it strike root, and bring forth fruit in due season.

* It was made known to a celebrated preacher that the great success of his sermons was due, not to his eloquence and oratory, but to the humble prayers of a poor woman, telling her beads on the steps of the pulpit.

158. RELAPSE.

"In time of temptation, they fall away." Lke. viii. 13.

i. Relapse into corporal disease is full of danger.
ii. So likewise is spiritual relapse to the soul.

Relapse into sin:

i. Means: falling into the same sin after confession.
ii. To escape such evil, three obstacles must be removed:—
  a. We must avoid the occasions of former sin.
  b. We must not despise the grace of pardon now received.
  c. We must lay aside such worldly cares, as draw off from God.
iii. Each relapse makes our state worse before Him, as Christ declares:
  "Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee." Jn. v. 14.
  "The last state . . . becomes worse than the first." Lke. xi. 26.
  Typified by the seven wicked spirits entering the soul.
iv. It also makes us more responsible:
  a. Greater mercy and light prove greater ingratitude; and
  b. Every relapse is a fresh and greater sin.
v. Repetition of acts makes easy: *e.g.*
  Practising a musical instrument makes a good player.
  Repeated firing makes a steady shot.
vi. So, sin repeated becomes more easy to commit.
  The attraction is greater, the power of resistance is less.
vii The soul is then more abandoned of God:
  a. Relapse is an abuse of the mercy of pardon.
  b. Such abuse of grace provokes God to anger.
  c. What reason thus to tremble at His threats:
  "You shall seek Me, and shall not find Me." Jn. vii. 34.
  "You shall seek Me, and you shall die in your sins." Jn. viii. 21.

d. S. Paul tells how these threats were executed on the Jews: Rom. xi. 8.

viii. Thus does the heart harden in sin, to rise no more. Example of Samson.*

ix. God makes indeed consoling promises to those that repent.

"He that shall forsake them (sins), shall obtain mercy." Prov. xxviii. 13.

"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart." Ps. xxxiii. 19.

x. Examples of God's readiness to pardon.
S. Mary Magdalen: Lke. vii.
Parable of the Prodigal: *Ibid.* xv.

xi. But where does God promise pardon to such as abuse His grace?

xii. S. Peter compares the relapsing sinner to
The dog returning to his vomit: 2 Pet. ii. 22 (from Prov. xxvi. 11).
The sow that was washed, to her wallowing place.
How forcible these expressions, yet how true!

xiii. Relapse is thus the high road to eternal damnation.

xiv. Only by *forsaking* sin, can we hope for mercy.
To this end, we *must* take the

Means to avoid relapse:

i. Guarding against occasions of fall:
a. Unnecessary, to be avoided at all cost: Mth. v. 29.
b. Necessary, by making them remote.

ii. Daily prayer, and renewal of resolution.

iii. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints.

iv. Frequentation of the Sacraments.

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* Samson, blinded by his passion for Delila, allowed himself to be deluded by her, although she had already betrayed him several times; but he was at last deprived of his strength, without being aware it had left him. He then fell into the power of his enemies, and became their slave for life. *Judg. xvi.*—So, the relapsing sinner thinks of rising again after his next fall, as before, not reflecting that the Lord frequently departs from those who thus abuse His mercy.

159. SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.

i. Faith is to the Soul, what Sight is to the Body.
   a. Spiritual blindness is the privation of Faith; as
   b. Bodily blindness is loss of sight.

ii. Spiritual blindness shows itself in many forms: *e.g.*
   a. Mistaking grave sins as venial.
   b. Showing outward piety, along with neglect of duty.
   c. Tepidity and indifference to the voice of conscience.

iii. Ask the miracle of God's grace to overcome this spiritual disease.
   As the blind man of Jericho asked for his bodily sight.

iv. Consider therefore the *Causes* and *Effects* of such evil, then the *Means* to overcome it.

I. **Causes**; whatever tends to weaken faith: *e.g.*

i. *Pride*, which darkens the mind, and drives out God's light.
   "God resisteth the proud." Jas. iv. 6.

ii. *Lust*, which stifles supernatural light, and sacrifices soul to body.
   "The sensual man perceiveth not those things that are of the spirit." 1 Cor. ii. 14.

iii. *Love of ease*, producing tepidity and indifference, whereas
   "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence." Mth. xi. 12.

iv. *Attachment to riches:*
   "Set not your heart upon them." Ps. lxi. 11.
   a. Working exclusively for the things that pass.
   b. Doing little or nothing for those that last for ever.
   c. Hardening the heart against the wants of the poor.
   Thus blinding the intellect to the true value of things.

v. The *Devil*, the father of lies, who
   a. Blinds souls to their true and best interests.
   As with Adam and Eve in Eden: Gen. iii. 4.
   b. Keeps them subject to himself through their passions.*

II. **Effects,** in the Christian:

i. He fails to realize the supernatural, the value of grace, etc.

ii. He sees not the need of prayer or the Sacraments.

iii. He goes to Death, Judgment and Eternity without preparation.

iv. He is reduced to beg, like the blind man in the Gospel: *i.e.*

He seeks in creatures the satisfaction of his pride and evil desires.

v. To heal such blindness, let him employ certain

III. **Means,** such as the blind man took: viz.

i. Enquiry after truth and knowledge of God:

a. The blind man enquired who was passing, and learnt it was Jesus.

b. He knew of the miracles wrought by Him; and

c. Truly regarded Him as the promised Messiah.

ii. The knowledge of God spreads light throughout the soul.

a. Scattering illusions and false ideas.

b. Hence the need and the duty of seeking instruction.

c. See the value of religious training in the young.

iii. Fervent appeals to God's mercy and power.

"Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me." Lke. xviii. 38.
"Lord, that I may see." *Ibid.* 41.

Lessons:

i. Jesus is passing now, and may not return; *i.e.*

This very instruction is His healing grace to some soul here.

ii. Take the above means to obtain the cure of your spiritual blindness.

If you reject them, or delay, the grace may be lost for ever.

iii. Ever ask the gift of Faith, which is the spiritual sight of the soul.

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* When the devil holds a man in the bondage of sin, his chief care is to blind him more and more, and to keep him from every thought which might lead him to a knowledge of his miserable condition,—*Scupoli.*

160. SELF-EXAMINATION.

"Lord, that I may see." Lke. xviii. 41.

i. The Lord's appearance and question to Solomon: 3 Kgs. iii. 5.
ii. Solomon's answer a model to us. For,
  a. We too require "an understanding heart;" and,
  b. The blind man's petition should also be ours.
iii. Of an occasional review of our past, consider:

I. The Advantages:

i. It lays bare faults and transgressions overlooked before, which
  a. Puts us on our guard against repeating them.
  b. Helps to move us to deeper contrition.
  c. Makes us more fervent to do penance.
ii. It serves to humble us:
  a. Showing all our sins, as at a glance.
  b. Forcing us to acknowledge our misery and sinfulness.
  c. Exciting us to beg for mercy, like David: Ps. xxix. 12.
iii. It helps to show us our position:
  a. Whether we are advancing, or losing ground.
  b. Like the merchant, summing up accounts at the audit.
iv. It makes our conscience more pure and tender. The mirror is brighter, the oftener it is swept.
v. At present, it will help us to spend well the season of Lent.

II. The Method:

i. Consider the confessions of the past: whether,
  a. The examination of conscience was carefully made?

b. Contrition was real and sincere?
c. The confession full and complete?

ii. Examine the sins committed, and the number of times:
a. Against the Commandments of God.
b. Against the Commandments of the Church.
c. The seven deadly sins, sources of other sins.
d. The duties of one's state in life:
1. As to omissions and commissions.
2. A most important point, too often neglected.
e. The use made of the benefits of Religion, *e.g.*
1. Sacraments and Sacrifice.
2. Prayers and Church Services.
3. Sermons and Instructions.
4. Feasts and Fasts.

iii. Pay more heed to the contrition than to details of sin. Hence,
a. Pray for it fervently, for it is God's gift.
b. Make a visit in spirit to
1. *Hell*, the punishment of sin.
2. *Heaven*, lost by sin.
3. *Calvary*, the work of sin.
c. Invoke the aid of models of repentance: *e.g.*
King David: Ps. l.
S. Peter: Mth. xxvi. 75.
S. Mary Magdalen: Lke. vii. 47.
S. Margaret of Cortona: Feb. 22.
S. Augustine: Aug. 28.

Conclusions:

i. Daily examination of conscience most useful.
ii. Make an occasional general review of the past. Especially suitable to seasons like the present.
iii. Join to it the spirit and practice of a penitential life.

161. TEMPTATION.

"Jesus was led . . . to be tempted." Mth. iv. 1.

i. To-day's Gospel is full of useful instruction:
The example of Our Lord under temptation.
ii. All men are liable to temptation in some form.
iii. Consider therefore a question of practical import to all.

Temptation:

i. An allurement to sin, an incitement to evil.
The Serpent and our first parents: Gen. iii.
The Devil and Our Lord in to-day's Gospel.
ii. Three stages in temptation:
a. Suggestion:
1. Any act in which a thing forbidden is put before us.
2. May spring
α. From without: sinful words or acts of others.
β. From within: sinful thoughts and imaginations.
3. Not in itself sinful: on the contrary,
4. An occasion of merit, if we reject it.
5. We need not therefore repine at it.
"The disciple is not above the master." Mth. x. 24.
b. Pleasure in the object presented:
1. Through proneness to evil, we are easily affected by sinful objects.
2. Hence the need of at once resisting the suggestion.
Contrast Our Lord's conduct and that of Adam and Eve.
3. If the mind dally with pleasure, there may be a beginning of sin.
Example of S. John Gualbert, meeting his brother's assassin: July 12.
c. Consent:
1. Exercise of the will, doing what it knows to be wrong.
Adam and Eve taking the forbidden fruit.

2. The heart is the seat of the will, in Scriptural language.
   Sin thus implies giving the heart to something opposed to God.
3. Yet the heart is the one thing God asks of us.
   This we give best by observing His Law.

iii. Knowledge of the nature of temptation useful and necessary.
   a. It should calm those who are distressed with temptation.
   b. It should make us watchful against the first approach of evil.

iv. Temptations are useful.
   a. They show us our strength or weakness.
      These cannot be known till tested.
   b. They become to us a source of merit and reward.
      1. Every temptation overcome means increase of glory.
      2. Hence the man that is tempted is called blessed: Jas. i. 12.
   c. They serve to atone for sin:
      Like any other cross or trial.
      1. Sometimes temptations are the results of past sin.
      2. If borne in the spirit of penance, they make reparation.

Lessons;

i. *Before* temptation: foresee and avoid the occasions of it.
ii. *During* temptation: prayer to God, and cheerfulness.
   a. The devil cannot attack God directly.
   b. He does it therefore indirectly, through us.
   c. Thus we are fighting God's battles, and He will help us.
iii. *After* temptation:
   a. If yielded to: act of contrition; confession, if necessary.
   b. If resisted: thanks to God, and to Him the glory.
iv. Above all, be not distressed: temptation is not sin.
   a. All the Saints have been subject to it.
   b. There is no ripe fruit unpecked by the birds.

162. FASTING.

"He fasted forty days and forty nights." Mth. iv. 2.

i. Lent especially a time for fasting and penance.
ii. Consider this practice, of which Our Lord gives us the example.

Fast of Lent:

i. In the state of primitive innocence, penance not necessary. But,
ii. Through the Fall, mortification became so, as
   a. A means of atonement for past sin, and
   b. A preventive against future sin.
iii. Lest the duty of penance be neglected, the Church appoints Lent for it.
   Probably, from the time of the Apostles themselves.
iv. Binding under sin, unless there be lawful dispensation.

> "*Whatsoever* you shall bind on earth, shall be bound also in Heaven." Mth. xviii. 18.
> "Let every soul be subject to higher powers." Rom. xiii. 1.

v. Our Lord fasted, as to-day's Gospel reminds us:
   a. To fulfil types of Himself: *e.g.*
      Moses fasted, before receiving the Old Law: Deut. ix. 9.
      Elias, before seeing God on Horeb: 3 Kgs. xix. 8.
   b. To prepare for promulgating the New Law.
   c. To teach and encourage us by His example.

Fasting:

i. Comprises two distinct elements, viz.:
   a. *Quantity* of food:
      1. Only one full meal a day—the essence of a fast-day.
      2. Evening collation of not more than 8 oz.
      3. In England, by custom, 2 oz. allowed in the morning.

b. *Quality* of food:
1. Flesh-meat forbidden.
Though now allowed, on certain days.
2. Flesh and fish never allowed at the same meal.

ii. Binds all between the ages of 21 and 60 years.
a. Under pain of mortal sin, unless lawfully dispensed.
b. Judge not in your own case; or you may err,
1. By scrupulous severity; or rather,
2. By lax decision in your own favour.

iii. Dispensation can only be given by lawful authority:
a. Then it does not dispense from abstinence.
b. And extends only so far as given.

Advantages:

i. It appeases God's anger: *e.g.*
The Ninevites: Jon. iii. 10.

ii. It atones for past sin,
Which *must* be expiated, here or hereafter.

iii. It preserves against future sin.
"I chastise my body, lest . . . I should become a castaway." 1 Cor. ix. 27.

iv. It subdues the unruly passions.
Hence the esteem the Saints had of it.

v. It tends also even to bodily health.
See the vigour and long life of the hermits.*

Lessons:

i. Do not shirk the weighty obligation of fasting.

ii. But do not make it a plea for indulgence in other ways.†

iii. If unequal to it, don't take the Law into your own hands.

iv. Compensate for dispensation, by penance in other ways. For,

v. To penance in some form every one is bound.
"Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish." Lke. xiii. 3.

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* S. Paul, the Hermit, lived to be 113; S. Anthony, 105; S. Arsenius, 120; all were of simple and austere lives.

† On fast-days, you will not eat flesh, but you devour your brother by irritating words; you drink no wine, but you cannot refrain from railing.—*S. Basil.*

163. THE TRANSFIGURATION.

"He was transfigured before them." Mth. xvii. 2.

i. How different this event from that of last Sunday's Gospel.
   a. There, temptation; here, triumph.
   b. Then struggle; now, peace and glory.
ii. Our Lord's transfiguration, a recompense for His temptation.
   So reward is in store for us, if we conquer.
iii. Take some points of this glorious manifestation.

I. How was Christ transfigured?

i. He did not show His Divinity, as the Saints behold it. But,
ii. He communicated to His Body some of the glory of His soul.
   a. His whole body shining more brightly than the sun.
   b. Even His garments becoming white as snow.
iii. A cloud overshadowed the witnesses, symbol of divine presence.
   As when God appeared to Moses: Ex. xix. 9.
iv. Typifying a four-fold transformation, viz:
   a. In the *Incarnation:* the Divinity truly present in Human Form.
   b. On the *Cross:* as a worm and no man: Ps. xxi. 7.
   c. At the *Resurrection:* in splendour and power.
   d. In the *Holy Eucharist:* under the sacramental veil.
v. A *physical* transfiguration, in the body.
   Not merely *moral*, as some Saints have had in ecstasy.

II. Why was Christ transfigured?

i. To prove His Divinity to the Three.
ii. To strengthen them for His approaching Passion.
   And in them, the other Apostles, and the Faithful.
iii. To foreshadow His future coming in glory.
   a. Confirming their faith therein.
   b. Hence, Elias present, who will reappear at the last day.

iv. To show what treasures of glory await us in Heaven.
Where the least of the Blessed has greater glory than Christ here displayed.
v. To show how the beauty of Heaven transcends all earthly beauty.
vi. To encourage His followers to bear trials, in hope of similar glory.
vii. To represent the soul transformed in prayer, whereby
a. The weak are made strong.
b. The slothful become fervent.
viii. To instruct us as to the quality of risen bodies, in the Blessed.

III. **Why so few witnesses?**

i. Our Lord came to save by humiliations.
Hence He showed His glory as little as possible.
ii. These three Apostles, the foremost:
a. *Peter* was to be the future head of the Church: *Faith.*
b. *James*, most faithful, the first to die for God: *Hope.*
c. *John*, the living theologian of Christ's Divinity: *Charity.*
All three to witness the agony: Mth. xxvi. 37.
iii. As to the representatives of the Past:
a. *Moses* symbolized the Law, foreshadowing the Messiah.
b. *Elias*, the prophets who foretold Him.
iv. God treats all equally, as to essentials: *e.g.* grace for salvation.
Favours He may grant as He pleases.

Lessons:

i. Our Lord had more humiliation than glory in life.
Why should we repine, if *we* have also?
ii. To cheer us, God gives us passing glimpses of future reward:
S. Paul rapt up to Paradise: 2 Cor. xii. 4.
Interior sweetnesses of soul.
iii. To-day's Gospel must be taken with last Sunday's, reminding us that joy follows trial.
iv. If Lent be a time of penance, Easter will be a day of joy.

164. HEAVEN.

"It is good for us to be here." Mth. xvii. 4.

i. S. Peter's delight at the Transfiguration shown in these words.

ii. They suggest the thought of Heaven:

a. Always a consoling and encouraging thought.

b. An appropriate truth to dwell on in Lent.

Heaven;

"Glorious things are said of thee, O City of God." Ps. lxxxvi. 3.

i. Place of reward for all who die in grace.

ii. The land of happiness and joy, peace and plenty.

a. Long: all its goods are eternal.

b. Broad: containing all possible joys for

1. Soul: to see, love, and enjoy God.
2. Body: life, health, youth and beauty.

c. High: its joys noble and exalted above conception: 1 Cor. ii. 9.

d. Deep: its happiness unmixed with any evil.

Happiness of Heaven:

i. To *see* God face to face: 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

a. Every faculty of soul and body illumined by the light of glory.

b. In Himself, as He is: 1 Jn. iii. 2.

1. Unity, Trinity, and Perfections.
2. Providence and mercies to men.

c. In Him, the Blessed see the prayers and wants of those on earth.

d. They also recognize each other, as they did here below.

e. The reward of *Faith.*

ii. To *love* God:

a. With intense energy and devotion, not as here on earth.

b. The sight of His perfections enamours the soul of Him.

c. All things in and for God, as He loves them.
d. To praise, bless and thank Him passionately.
e. The reward of *Charity*.

iii. To *enjoy* God:
a. The Blessed, in their Knowledge and Love, possess God.
b. In this way they enjoy God.
c. The reward of their *Hope*.

iv. Of various degrees, according to the merits of each.
"He will render to every man according to his works." Mth. xvi. 27.
"He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly." 2 Cor. ix. 6.

v. Doctors, Martyrs and Virgins will have a special glory of their own.

vi. All, however, happy and content amid the inequality.

vii. Not disturbed by separation from friends in Hell. They bless and adore the infinite Justice and divine Will of God.

viii. Accidental happiness may increase with time.
a. Every new arrival adds to the general joy.
b. Our good works may do good after us, and so add to our reward!

ix. Eternal:
a. Essential to real and complete happiness.
b. Without any fear of loss or diminution.

Lessons:

i. Meditation on Heaven:
a. A preservative against sin: Ecclus. vii. 40.
b. A spur to vigilance and care.
c. A support in penance and trial.

ii. Examples to encourage us.*

iii. If Heaven be gained, all is gained!

* S. Paul, rapt up to Heaven, unable to recount the beauty thereof. 1 Cor. ii. 9—S. Chrysostom said he would be willing to pass through hell-fire to possess God in Heaven—S. Adrian, M. converted to the Faith, by the thought of this eternal reward.

165. THE TWO STANDARDS.

"He that is not with Me is against Me." Lke. xi. 23.

i. There are two standards unfurled in the world:
   a. The standard of *Good*, borne by Our Saviour.
   b. The standard of *Evil*, carried by the Devil.
ii. Meditate on these words, and see where we stand.

I. The Standard of Evil:

i. Inscribed: "Honours, riches, pleasures—Happiness."
   a. These of themselves not sinful.
   b. Thus they attract men.
   c. Yet they often and easily lead to sin.
ii. Evil spirits and wicked men are the bearers of this standard.
iii. These standard-bearers put before men the thought of
   a. Honours: to flatter their vanity, etc. to sinful degrees.
   b. Riches: to gain which, they commit injustice and other sins.
   c. Pleasures: to captivate them, and lead them to forbidden indulgence.
iv. These ministers of Satan work with a will,
   a. To lead the good from the path of virtue.
   b. To make sinners relapse, and contract habits of sin; and so,
   c. To retain them in tepidity and indifference.
v. Whosoever are led and guided by them
   a. Are really themselves ministers of Satan.
   b. Are fighting under the banner of the Devil.
   c. Are on the broad road leading to Hell and damnation.
vi. Satan and his ministers are found all over the globe.*

II. The Standard of Good:

i. Inscribed: "Penance, Christian life—Heaven."
   a. Penance, of itself, not attractive to flesh and blood. But,
   b. It brings with it peace and holy joy.
   c. Experience of the Saints and the Just proves this.

ii. Our Lord employs Angels, Priests and good people in the world,
  a. To urge the wicked to repentance and amendment.
  b. To lead the good to greater sanctity and perseverance.
iii. He bids them
  a. Show the fleeting character of honours, riches and pleasures.
  b. Teach the spirit of penance, as a source of Christian perfection.
  c. Give peace to souls, through the pardon of sin.
  d. Guide men to Heaven, by advice, sympathy and example.
iv. The standard-bearers of Christ also work with fervour:
  a. Burning with zeal for the salvation of souls.
  b. Teaching Christian doctrine to little ones.
  c. Visiting the lax, the sick and dying:
    Often a thankless task, but done for God.
  d. Travelling from country to country:
    Like S. Francis Xavier and Catholic missionaries.
v. Whoso acts thus is
  a. Truly a minister of God.
  b. Fighting under the banner of Christ.
  c. Leading men to Heaven and eternal salvation.
vi. An honour and a privilege to fight under the standard of Good.

Lessons:

i. Under one or other of these banners all must stand.
ii. Lent, a time for considering where we are in the matter.
iii. If we really wish for salvation, the banner of Christ is our only Hope.
iv. Resolution by each one, according to his needs.

* S. Antony seemed to see the whole world covered with the snares of the Evil One and exclaimed: "Who shall ever escape them?" A voice replied: "The humble man." Humility must be opposed to the pride of Satan.

166. HEARING THE WORD OF GOD.

"Blessed they who hear the Word of God and keep it." Lke. xi. 28.

i. These words contain
   a. *Instruction:* teaching a simple means for obtaining a blessing.
   b. *Encouragement:* for the means is within the reach of all.
   c. *Caution:* if we take not the means, we cannot expect the blessing.
ii. Hearing the Word is a weighty obligation.

The Church has authority to teach:

i. Scripture urges the duty of hearing the Church.
   "He that heareth you heareth Me." Lke. x. 16.
   "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing, by the Word of Christ." Rom. x. 17.
ii. The Church has to defend the Faithful against error.
   a. Preaching is a weapon of her enemies to spread error.
   b. She is bound therefore to teach, preach and instruct.
iii. Preaching is an obligation weighing on the priest.
   S. Paul fears for himself, should be fail therein: 1 Cor. ix. 16.
   The Council of Trent recalls this obligation: Sess. xxiv. c. iv.
iv. Hence the duty of the Faithful to hear the Word.

Hearing the Word:

i. One of the ordinary means of grace and salvation.
   a. In many cases we cannot know our duty, unless we are taught.
   b. Instruction will not come, if we deliberately fail to hear it.
ii. Some seem to think sermons are not necessary.
   a. None need them more than they who think they need them not.
   b. In some cases, omission of this duty may be a mortal sin.
iii. In all other matters, men need and receive instruction: *e.g.*

In Law, in Medicine, to be up to date.
Why not then in Religion, the highest of all Sciences?

iv. The obligation of preaching implies the correlative duty of hearing.

v. How then describe such as habitually neglect it?
   a. The Church has no reason to be proud of them!
   b. She *has* reason to fear they may fall in time of trial.*

vi. One of the uses of Churches is for preaching the Word:
   As Our Lord constantly taught in the Temple: Lke. xix. 47.

vii. The nature of the subjects treated shows their importance: *e.g.*
   a. Doctrinal truths: *e.g.* The Incarnation; the Eucharist.
   b. Moral truths: *e.g.* Justice; Purity; Obedience.
   c. Duties and obligations of states of life.

viii. Too many neglect to hear the Word, through
   a. Pride: thinking it suitable only to children and the poor.
   b. Indolence: seeking comfort at home, reading, etc.
   Having ears to hear, they do not hear.

ix. Yet hearing the Word is an essential prelude to keeping it.

Lessons:

i. You may have much to answer for, if you wilfully omit to hear instruction.

ii. Many owe their conversion and salvation to hearing God's Word.
   S. Antony: Jan. 17.
   S. Francis of Assisi: Oct. 4.

iii. Responsibility of parents in this regard, as to their children!

iv. God's blessing is attached to hearing and keeping the Word:
   This blessing we cannot afford to lose!

v. Therefore resolve on doing your best, in this all important duty.

* Words of the Curé of Ars, p. 249.

167. HOLY COMMUNION.

"Jesus took the loaves and . . . distributed to them." Jn. vi. 11.

i. Our Lord's anxiety for the multitude is shared by the Church now. For,
   a. Numbers are preparing for Easter Communion; and,
   b. The question is how best to receive it.
ii. Some thoughts to-day on this divine food of our souls.

Holy Eucharist:

i. The invention of God's love, to be near us.
   Words of Moses to the people: Deut. iv. 7.
ii. No human idea could conceive such a stretch of power as this.
iii. Is really a prolongation of the Incarnation:
   a. Our Lord not physically present to the senses, as then.
   b. Yet the Sacrament does impress the senses.
      The accidents of the species truly cover Him, here or there.
iv. The greatest of the Sacraments:
   a. A means of grace to the soul, independent of ourselves. Yet,
   b. Requires preparation in us.
      1. Chiefly the removal of obstacles; and,
      2. Exciting great desire.
   c. Draws the will to adhere to God—devotion.
   d. Delivers from daily faults, and preserves from mortal sin.
      As declared by the Council of Trent, against Calvinism.
v. Effects union, which includes two thoughts:
   a. Love of Our Lord for union, symbolized by His being our food.
   b. Spiritual clinging of man's will to God's: *i.e.* Having same desires, same judgments as He.
   c. Thus, truly, Jesus herein gives us His own Heart, taking our heart away.

Means to profit by this Gift:

i. To *understand* it, as far as we may:
   a. Wide field for thought and instruction.
   b. Read its history, and the sayings of the Saints.
   c. The more this is done, the more is the heart influenced.

ii. Careful use of the Sacrament of *Penance:*
   a. Chiefly in warring against venial sin.
   b. Reduce the power of bad habits.
   c. Try to be washed "yet more" from iniquity.
   d. Present the heart empty of self, for the influx of grace.

iii. Actual *devotion*, by exciting
   a. Deep faith and trust in the Real Presence.
   b. Humble contrition for sin.
   c. Longing desire to receive Our Lord.

iv. *Thanksgiving;* some fifteen minutes, during which,
   a. Acts of the soul are more fervent.
   b. More ready answers are given to petition; and
   c. Our transformation to the likeness of Jesus is more efficacious.

Therefore let not these precious moments of the divine Presence slip by unheeded.

Lessons:

i. Try to have a deep appreciation of this wondrous gift.

ii. Receive it with gratitude:
   a. Not according to impulse, or absence of fervour.
   b. But guided by reason and faith; for,
   c. Devotion lies not in the feelings, but in the Will.

iii. In any case, fail not to receive it at this season.

iv Pray that all who are bound may do the same; to find therein
   a. A source of strength and joy, even now.
   b. A fountain of increased happiness in Heaven.

v. Receiving Communion frequently in life, a means to obtain it as Viaticum at death.

168. THE GOSPEL EXAMPLE.

i. Like the multitude in the Gospel, we have three things to do: viz.
   a. To follow Jesus.
   b. To receive the divine Food He gives.
   c. To proclaim Him our King.
ii. See how to do this, and whether we do it.

I. We must follow Jesus:

i. MOTIVES for doing so:
   a. The *Will of God:* for Jesus is: (Jn. xiv. 6.)
      1. The *Way*, that leads to happiness, here and hereafter.
      2. The *Truth:*
         α. Enlightening our minds against error.
         β. Without it, we cannot hope to see the splendours of Heaven.
      3. The *Life* of our soul, as the soul is of the body.
         α. By grace and friendship.
         β. By sacramental union, in the Holy Eucharist.
   b. Our *Baptismal Promises*, wherein
      We renounce the Devil, to follow Christ.
   c. Our best *Interests:* for, to follow Jesus is
      1. To cast off sinful habits.
      2. To acquire the virtues that adorn the soul.
      3. To gain a title to the glory He holds out to us.
ii. MEANS: obedience to the Laws of
   a. God, laid down in the Gospels, the study of which is a source of
      1. *Light* to the Mind.
      2. *Consolation* to the Heart.
      3. *Energy* to the Will.
   b. The Church, who speaks in God's name: *e.g.*
      1. Laws of fasting and abstinence.
      2. Obligation of hearing Mass.
      3. The Easter Precept: *i.e.*

II. We must receive His divine Gift:

i. Precept of Our Lord Himself:

"Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man. . . ." Jn. vi. 54.

ii. To refuse this, is to disobey

a. Jesus Christ, our Creator, Redeemer and future Judge.

b. The Church, who requires it of her children.

1. Once a year at least, to fulfil her command.
2. Often, to comply with her desire.

iii. With proper dispositions: viz.

a. The state of Grace, through Confession: (*Soul*): 1 Cor. xi. 28.

b. Fasting from midnight: (*Body*).

c. Worthy preparation and thanksgiving: (*Heart*).

III. We must proclaim Jesus King:

i. MOTIVES:

a. Gratitude:

1. After the multiplication of the loaves, the Jews wanted to make Christ King.
2. The Eucharistic Bread is multiplied daily, and demands similar loyalty.

b. Justice:

1. We gave ourselves to Him in Baptism and First Communion.
2. To withdraw our allegiance would be as perjury.

c. If Jesus be not our King here, He will not be hereafter.

What else will then avail us? Mth. xvi. 26.

ii. MEANS:

a. Lively *Faith* in the *Mind*, submitting the intelligence to His sway.

b. Burning *Charity* in the *Heart*, towards God and our neighbour.

c. Humble *Resignation* in the *Will*, to God's divine appointments.

1. Thus will Jesus reign over our whole being: and,
2. Then can we say, each one, "Christ liveth in me." Gal. ii. 20.

169. PATIENCE.

"Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil." Jn. viii. 48.

i. Such insults as these words imply Our Lord bears in patience.
ii. He teaches us by example how to act under like circumstances.
iii. Consider the virtue of Patience, so necessary to all.

Patience:

i. The virtue which
   a. Tempers sorrow amid present evils.
   b. Bears calmly the trials of life.
ii. The object of Patience: crosses of all kinds, *e.g.*
   a. Sadness and weariness of mind.
   b. Sickness and pain of body.
   c. Humiliations and insults.
   d. Loss of wealth and position.
   e. Difficulties of daily duties.
   f. Enmities and opposition.

> "Man born of a woman . . . is filled with many miseries." Job xiv. 1.

iii. Two degrees of Patience:
   a. *Resignation* in trial:
      1. By which we accept crosses, as from the hand of God.
      2. Which excludes murmurs, but not the wish to be relieved.
      3. This much, necessary for the Christian life.
   b. *Joy* in trial:
      1. To receive crosses gladly, as treasures from God.
         The Apostles, before the Council: Acts v. 41.
      2. This higher degree, the aim of the Saints. "To suffer, or to die," the motto of S. Teresa.
      3. For the honour of God, acquiesce in His will herein.
         You cannot serve Him better otherwise.

Motives for Patience:

i. Its *necessity*: for who can escape trial?
   a. Only by tribulation can we enter Heaven: Acts xiv. 21.
   b. The very Pagans advised patience, as alleviation in woe.
ii. Its *excellence* and utility:
   a. Christ chose the Cross as most useful to man.
   b. Trials borne patiently serve to heal evil inclinations.
   c. They help to shorten Purgatory.
   d. They strengthen virtue.
   As the storm does the oak.
iii. The *joy* it brings:

"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy." Jn. xvi. 20.

   S. Paul, amid his tribulations: 2 Cor. vii. 4.
   S. Lawrence, on the gridiron: Aug. 10.
iv. The great *merit* and reward it obtains: 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Practice of Patience: obtained by

i. Prayer to God.
ii. Bearing of daily small contradictions.
iii. Studying the examples of
   a. Our Lord: Hebr. xii. 3.*
   b. The Saints.†
iv. Remembering our sins in the past and the punishment due to them.

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* Recall the Patience of Our Saviour in the various incidents of His Passion, which we are now commemorating, for instance: His betrayal and the Agony in the Garden; the blow on the Face; the insults of the crowd; His Crucifixion and Death.

† Job, the model of Patience—S. Teresa, the lover of the Cross, cast her eyes on her sins, on Heaven and on Calvary—S. Clare, for twenty years afflicted with illness, declared no pain bitter to her, when she remembered her Lord's sufferings—So too S. Lydwina, for thirty-eight years on a bed of sickness.

170. MEEKNESS.

"Now we know that Thou hast a devil." **Jn. viii. 52.**

i. The insults of this Gospel narrative show forth Our Lord's meekness.

ii. He proves it by His forbearance of His enemies.

iii. Study this beautiful virtue, so prominent throughout the Passion.

a. Meekness, pre-eminently a virtue of the Christian.

b. Hence Christ speaks of His followers as sheep or lambs.

Meekness:

i. Virtue moderating our feelings of impatience and revenge.

a. All anger is not sinful: Ps. iv. 5. Yet,

b. Because of our proneness to evil, it easily becomes so.

c. Meekness is thus necessary to restrain all passion.

ii. Most amiable virtue, disarming an opponent's anger. The cannon ball.*

iii. Mark of a true disciple of Christ.

"Learn of Me, because I am meek." **Mth. xi. 29.**

iv. Quite consistent with firmness and exercise of authority.

Our Lord and the Pharisees: Mth. xxii. 18.

His driving the sellers from the Temple: Lke. xix. 45.

Moses, when the people fell into idolatry: Deut. ix. 17.

Motives for Meekness:

i. Its very necessity, especially in superiors.

ii. Men given to anger are not

a. Rational beings, not following the guidance of reason.

b. Christians, not imitating the gentleness of their Head.

c. Spiritual men, not possessing the spirit of prayer.

iii. Shown in Holy Writ:

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the Land." Mth. v. 4.

"The Lord lifteth up the meek." Ps. cxlvi. 6.

iv. Meekness conquers the anger of others.

"A mild answer breaketh wrath." Prov. xv. 1.

"What water is to fire, meekness is to anger." *S. Chrys.*

v. The effects in one's self:

a. Peace of mind.

b. Influence over others.

The Sun and the Wind.†

S. Francis of Sales converted more by his humility than by his preaching.

c. Success in undertakings.

vi. See the evils of Anger, *e.g.:* (p. 120.)

Scandal, enmities, obstinacy, revenge, ill-health, etc.

Practice of Meekness:

i. Obtained by

a. Prayer to God for humility: Mth. xi. 29.

b. Foreseeing occasions of opposition.

c. Study of Our Lord, His Saints and Martyrs.

d. Recollection of our own sins and defects.

ii. To be exercised

a. Towards all men, and in all circumstances. Especially when giving or receiving reproof.

b. In the heart, in our looks, words and acts.

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* A cannon ball will crush a rock or any hard body it falls on; but if it strike a woolpack, its speed and violence are stayed. So, if reproaches and anger meet with meekness of heart and gentleness of reply, they give way and lose all power.—*Scaramelli.*

† The Wind with much bluster and fury tried to make a traveller remove his cloak; but he only drew it round him the more closely. Then the Sun began gently and quietly to give forth his heat, when the traveller, quite overcome, at once removed his cloak. Meekness and persuasion are better than anger and force!—*Æsop.*

171. OUR LORD'S SADNESS.

"He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad." Mth. xxvi. 37.

i. This *Great Week* commemorates Our Lord's sufferings and sadness.

ii. Meditation on these very salutary.
The Saints have ever loved to dwell on the Sacred Passion.

Causes of His Sadness:

i. His coming Passion and Death.
a. He foresaw His torments and sufferings: *e.g.* The Scourging, the Crown, the Crucifixion.
b. So intense His perception of them, that He sweated blood.
Expiating thereby man's love of pleasure, feasting, etc.

ii. The sight of the sins of men.
a. He realized their gravity, and the insults they offered to God.
b. He took upon Himself to expiate them.
c. He felt anguish for them, as if His own!
Our blasphemies and sacrileges, murders and thefts, etc.

iii. The foresight of the sufferings of His followers:
a. His *Martyrs*, in their torments and death.
b. His *Confessors*, in persecution and calumny.
c. His *Virgins*, in preserving their virtue.
d. His *Prelates* and Priests, in guiding their flocks.
e. His *Faithful*, from the Devil, the World and the Flesh.

iv. The future ingratitude of men:
a. How few would profit by His sufferings.
b. How few would in the end be saved.
c. How sin and crime would abound.
d. How many, in spite of all, would be lost.

v. The sorrows of His Virgin Mother.
a. Especially at the foot of His Cross.
b. She was pierced to the heart, and this intensified His anguish.
c. He sorrowed, to see His Mother suffer for Him.

Objects of this Sadness:

i. To heal our sloth and cowardice in trial. Hence:
   a. In sorrow and pain, remember the agony of Christ.
   b. In temptation and trial, look up to Him,

> "Who having joy set before Him endured the Cross." Hebr. xii. 2.

ii. To lessen our horror and fear of Death.
   a. Death is not natural to man. But
   b. It was imposed in punishment of the Transgression.
   Hence we naturally shrink from it.
   c. Christ by His sorrows and death has lessened this repugnance.
   d. He has even made it a source of comfort, in the hope of a better life.
   The Martyrs therefore rejoiced in suffering and death.

Lessons:

i. Think this week on the sufferings and sadness of Christ.
   A powerful means to lighten your own.*
ii. Meditate seriously on their cause—the greatness of sin.
   An efficacious means of obtaining contrition and pardon.
iii. Resolve now on a more perfect life in future.
   The graces of the Passion will strengthen your resolve.†

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* As the bitter waters became sweet, when Moses had cast into them the wood the Lord had shown him (Ex. xv. 25), so the wood of the Cross, put into our sufferings, will render them sweet and light to bear.—*Lohner.*

† Our Lord appearing to S. Edmund, while yet a child, urged him to think daily on some one of the sorrows of the Passion, for such practice would bring courage in temptation, strength for virtue, and powerful help in the hour of death.—*Surius.*

172. RESIGNATION.

"Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Mth. xxvi. 39.

i. The great remedy in the midst of trials is prayer and resignation.

ii. Under every cross therefore, we must have recourse to God.
Either that He would remove it, or give us strength to bear it.

iii. Our Lord in His Agony teaches the spirit of resignation.

Resignation:

i. An act of love, by which man submits his will to God.

ii. Praised and recommended in the inspired Word.

"If we have received good things . . . why should we not receive evil?" Job ii. 10.
"It is good for me to adhere to my God." Ps. lxxii. 28.
"He that doth the will of My Father . . . he shall enter . . . Heaven." Mth. vii. 21.
"He that doth the will of God abideth for ever." 1 Jn. ii. 17

iii. Motives:

a. Necessity:
God's authority and power is supreme and none can resist: Esth. xiii. 9.

b. Equity:
1. God is just, and His judgments right.
2. He is powerful, and His will must be done. Is. xlvi. 10.
3. He is good, and ordains all for the best.

c. Advantages:
1. It is a powerful shield in adversity.
2. The best disposition of heart for obtaining God's favours.
3. It more than anything brings peace and happiness.
Words of the *Imitation.**

iv. Means:

a. Lively *Faith:*

1. Knowing that nothing happens, but through the Providence of God.
2. Looking to our Creator and Father in all things.

The Sunflower.†

b. Burning *Charity.*

1. The effect of true love is to unite them that love.
2. There cannot be physical union with God, but moral union, through submission of our will.

c. *Mortification*, removing obstacles that selfishness puts in the way.

d. *Consideration* of examples of God's Providence: *e.g.*

The elevation of Joseph: Gen. l. 20.

The safety of the children in the furnace: Dan. iii.

Also of Daniel among the lions: Dan. vi.

e. *Obedience* to Superiors:

Thus is the will broken in, and practised to submission.

f. *Examples* among the Saints.

S. Paul's readiness: Acts ix. 6.

S. Lydwina, on her bed of sickness: Apl. 14.

S. Vincent, under calumny: July 19.

Lessons:

i. Every reason urges us to practise resignation.
ii. Say daily from the heart: "Thy will be done."
iii. Consider this week Our Lord's prayer in the Garden.
iv. The practice of this virtue is enough to make us saints.

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* I have very often said to thee, and I say it now again: forsake thyself, resign thyself, and thou shalt enjoy great peace within: thou wilt be free in heart, and darkness will not tread thee down.—*Imitation.*

† As the sunflower turns to the sun, even though the sky be clouded and overcast, so the man truly resigned submits to God in all things, even in the darkest adversity.—*Drexelius.*

173. THE PASSION.

"It is consummated." Jn. xix. 30.

i. Our Lord to-day completes His work of sacrifice:
   a. Emptying Himself of glory, power and even life itself.
   b. What more could He do for His vineyard, His people? Is. v. 4.

ii. Consider the completeness of Our Lord's sufferings and love.

Sufferings from Friends:

i. Betrayed by one Apostle for thirty pieces of silver: Mth. xxvi. 15.

ii. Denied by another, three times over: Mth. xxvi. 70.

iii. Abandoned by the rest: Mth. xxvi. 56.

iv. Rejected by His own people: Mth. xxvii. 21.
These, among the bitterest of His trials!

v. Do not *we* also reject Him, and pain Him by our ingratitude? *e.g.*
   a. By wilful neglect of Sunday Mass?
   b. By careless omission of Easter Communion?
   c. By disobedience to any of His Laws?

vi. Behold, to-day a suitable time for repentance and resolution!
If we be followers and friends of Christ, let us make Him amends.

Sufferings from Enemies;

i. His condemnation to death: Mth. xxvii. 26.

ii. His Scourging at the pillar: *Ibid.*

iii. His Crowning with thorns: *Ibid.* 29.

iv. His Crucifixion and Death: *Ibid.* 35.
The chief object of this day's veneration.
   a. Between two thieves, as a disgrace.
   b. His back on Jerusalem, which He now rejects.
   c. The three hours' agony and grief.

d. The seven Words He spoke on the Cross.
e. The Wonders that followed His death: Mth. xxvii. 51—53.

v. Worthy subject for meditation and deepest thought to-day.

Christ suffered of His own Free-will:

i. The Jews had often tried to seize Him before: *e.g.* Jn. vii. 30.
They did not succeed, for His time was not yet.

ii. Now He freely offers His limbs to the executioners.
No angel stays their hand, as with His prototype: Gen. xxii. 12.

iii. He still offers Himself freely on the Altar:
Too often suffering again from friend and foe.

iv. *We* may make a free offering to God:
a. By resignation to His divine will in all things.
b. By the practice of penance and self-denial.
c. By submitting to insult and opposition.

Thoughts for this day:

i. Good Friday, a day for meditation and penance, (not pleasure-seeking).

ii. Apprehend the *reality* of Our Lord's sufferings: *e.g.*
The real hardships of Bethlehem and Nazareth.
The real physical pains of His Passion and Death.

iii. The Cross is the source of spiritual health and strength.
Typified by the Brazen Serpent in the desert: Numb. xxi. 9.

iv. The Saints therein found sweetness in trial and death: *e.g.*
S. Lydwina, in her sufferings: Apl. 14.
S. Lawrence, on the gridiron: Aug. 10.
S. Vincent, under calumny: Jly. 19.
The Confessors and Martyrs.

v. To-day the day for pardon and forgiveness of injuries.
"Father, forgive them." Lke. xxiii. 34.

174. LESSONS FROM THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

"Bowing His head, He gave up the Ghost." Jn. xix. 30.

Learn four lessons to-day from Our Lord's Death:

I. **Jesus died:** who shall fear death?
- i. Death was not intended for man, but is a punishment: Wisd. ii. 23: Gen. ii. 17.
  - *a.* Hence our horror and fear of it.
  - *b.* Even Our Lord experienced such feeling: Mth. xxvi. 39.
- ii. Our Lord died, and took the sting from death.
- iii. He came not only to redeem us, but also by example to teach us.
- iv. Some have great fear of Death.
  - *a.* In *life*, such fear is good and commendable: Job xxviii. 28.
    It guards us against inconstancy and pride.
  - *b.* In *death*, we must have confidence in God's mercy. For,
- v. Consider how Our Lord died for our sakes.
  - *a.* It will encourage resignation to death, in ourselves and others.
  - *b.* Death is less terrible, since He suffered it. Hence,
- vi. Since Jesus has died, who need fear death?

II. **Jesus died for us:** who will not die for Him?
- i. We may not be called upon to die like the Martyrs. Yet,
- ii. If we are so called, or have to die for duty, why not die for Him? since
  - *a.* He died on Calvary all for us.
  - *b.* Confirmation gives strength for such a trial. Hence the need of receiving this Sacrament.
- iii. In any case, we shall have to die some day. Let us then be willing to go, when He calls.
- iv. Our Lord's death, the source of the spirit of sacrifice in the Saints.
  - *a.* They renounced the things of life and life itself for Him.

b. They renounced all, with eagerness and joy.
c. Be it ours to emulate their example. For,
v. Jesus died for us: who then will not die for Him?

III. **Jesus died in pain:** who will refuse to suffer?
i. If we are not called upon to die as Martyrs, all at least must suffer. For,
ii. Suffering is the lot of all men, since the fall:
In every condition: all through life: But,
iii. Our sufferings are as nothing, compared with Our Lord's.
iv. Suffering may become even a blessing: for,
a. As water cleanses in Baptism,
b. So penance and suffering purify the penitent.
c. And from it we may draw merit and glory,
As the bee makes honey from the bitter thyme.
v. As disciples of Our Lord, we must suffer, if we hope for Heaven: Lke. ix. 23: Mth. x. 24.
vi. Jesus died in agony: who will now refuse to suffer?

IV. **Jesus died for sin:** who will sin again?
i. Why did Our Lord suffer so much?
a. It was for the sins of men—yours and mine.
b. To make reparation for them, and regain us God's love.
ii. Picture to your mind the state Jesus was reduced to in death.
Then learn how terrible sin must be before Him.
iii. Nothing so helps to contrition, as thought on the Passion of Jesus.
iv. Hence on this day of all days, resolve against sin in future. For,
v. Jesus died for sin: who then can sin again?

Conclusion:
i. These four thoughts, so many practical lessons to all.
ii. If we take them to heart, the day will have been well spent.
iii. Meditation on the Sacred Passion and its benefits to men, is most pleasing to Him who endured it for their sakes. *Rodriguez.*

175. THE RESURRECTION.

"He is risen, He is not here." Mrk. xvi. 6.

i. This day's mystery, the foundation of our Religion.
ii. State the doctrine thus:
  a. Jesus Christ is truly God, if truly risen.
  b. He is risen, if the Apostles were not deceived, nor deceivers.
  c. They were neither: therefore,

I. The Apostles not deceived:

i. The Resurrection was a fact falling under the senses.
ii. During 40 days afterwards, Our Lord often conversed with the Apostles.
iii. At first, they refused to believe: *e.g.* S. Thomas.
iv. Only on clear proof, did they give assent; and,
v. At last were so convinced, as to preach it and die for it.

Thus the Apostles were not deceived.

II. The Apostles not deceivers:

i. They had no interest in deceiving, but all to fear:
  a. From God: punisament of imposture and impiety.
  b. From man: contempt and persecution.
ii. They had no means to deceive:
  a. They were timid during the Passion, and not bold now.
  b. The world would never believe such an imposture:
    They had no proof to offer in its favour.
  c. Yet the world does believe the Resurrection: and
  d. The Resurrection has converted the world, despite its passions.

Thus the Apostles have not deceived us.

III. Further Evidence:

i. The Priests bribing the soldiers: Mth. xxviii. 12, 13.
  a. Never known that a whole guard should sleep, risking honour and life for so doing.

b. If even they did, who could quietly remove the great stone?

c. If they slept, how could they know the Body was stolen?

d. If stolen, by whom stolen? By the disciples?

1. If they expected the Resurrection, they might well leave Our Lord to accomplish it.

2. If not, they had no interest to steal and deceive (*supra*).

ii. The Jewish Council did not deny the Resurrection, but forbade the Apostles to proclaim it: Acts iv. 16, 17.

iii. The apparitions of Our Lord:

a. To His holy Mother.
According to tradition, though not recorded in the Gospel.

b. To Magdalen and the holy Women: Mth. xxviii. 9.

c. To the Apostles: *e.g.*
Mth. xxviii. 18: Jn. xx. 19: Jn. xxi. 1.

d. To the disciples going to Emmaus: Lke. xxiv. 15.

iv. The constant tradition and teaching of the Church.

IV. Type and Figures:

i. Jonas, B.C. 800, in the whale's belly: Jon. ii. 1.
ii. Spring follows winter, and all things revive.
iii. Day succeeds night.
iv. The root, dormant in winter, revives in spring.

Lessons:

i. Everyone must know and believe the Resurrection of Christ:
It is the very foundation of Religion; for,
ii. If He be truly risen, He is God, and His Teaching divine.
We must therefore believe . . . and obey. . . .
iii. Our Lord's Resurrection, a pledge of our own.
iv. The hope of future Resurrection, strength and support in trial.
v. Truly then is this a day of gladness and joy.

176. JOY OF THE RESURRECTION.

"Go, tell His disciples and Peter." Mrk. xvi. 7.

i. Feelings of wonder and joy when the Resurrection was first announced.

ii. To us there seems an abruptness from Good Friday to to-day.
Yet during Lent we prepared for this joy, and have a right to it.

iii. Two points we may consider, viz.:
a. The *Fact*, as it was.
b. The *Commemoration*, as it is now.

I. **The first Easter-day,** a source of joy to

i. *The Eternal Father:*
a. In justice, He had required the sacrifice of His Son on Calvary.
b. What gladness now to reward Him!
c. He welcomes Him back to life with joy.
d. In the beginning, He said: "This day have I begotten Thee." Ps. ii. 7.
e. To-day He can add: "I crown Thee with glory."

ii. *The Holy Ghost:*
a. Bond of union between the Father and the Son.
b. Also between the soul in grace and God.
c. He too rejoices on reunion of soul and body this day.
As He presided over it, in the Incarnation.

iii. *The Son Himself:*
a. He had well earned His glory by suffering.
b. No proportion between present sorrow and future joy: 2 Cor. iv. 17.
How great then Our Saviour's joy and glory.
c. How changed for Him everything now is!
1. No more suffering or death.
2. Instead of the sadness of the Passion, triumphant jubilation.
3. Where now are Herod and Pilate, the Scribes and Priests!
d. Could any victory and joy be more complete!

iv. *The Blessed Virgin Mother:*
- *a.* Consider her loyal and constant attendance on her Son.
- *b.* Our Lord's first visit was to her, though the Gospels say it not.
- *c.* What a change! From the foot of the Cross to see Jesus by her! Cant. iii. 4.
- *d.* The Church expresses her sympathy of joy in the *Regina Cœli*.

v. *The Apostles:*
- *a.* Perhaps we condemn their timidity in the Passion.
  Yet Our Lord does not, but allows them to share His joy.
- *b.* They were to go and preach this mystery with power: Acts iv. 33.
  Therefore it had now to give them strength in gladness.
- *c.* Though they abandoned their Master, they ceased not to love.
  Hence they too were filled with the joy of the Resurrection.

II. **Easter-day now** should give joy to

i. *The whole Church:*
- *a.* See the depth of her sorrow, two days ago!
- *b.* In that proportion is her joy this day: 2 Cor. i. 7.
- *c.* She rejoices for the sake of her glorified Saviour.
- *d.* Also because His rising is a pledge of her own victory.
- *e.* And because of the return of many to God, in the sacraments.
  Hence her *Alleluias* at this season.

ii. *The Faithful individually:*
- *a.* According to their ability, they have observed Lent. Therefore,
- *b.* Each may now rejoice with his Saviour.
- *c.* But only to the obedient is this a day of joy.
  As only to the good did Our Lord appear.
- *d.* Penitents especially may rejoice, rising from sin.
- *e.* All may be glad with good resolutions and hope.

177. THE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY.

"The first day of the week." Jn. xx. 19.

i. Behold a first sanction of the Sunday in the New Law.
ii. In the Old Law, the sanctification of the Sabbath was commanded: Ex. xx. 8.
iii. In the New Law, the Sunday is of no less importance.

Sunday:

i. The change from the Sabbath effected by the Apostles:
   a. The work of Creation began on Sunday.
   b. Our Lord rose from the dead on a Sunday: Mth. xxviii. 1.
   c. The Apostles received the powers of absolution that day: Jn. xx. 23.
   d. The Holy Ghost came down upon them on a Sunday.
ii. The Bible does not teach this observance of the Sunday.
   The Bible therefore is not a sole rule of faith.
iii. As sacred now, as was the Sabbath of old.

Sanctification of Sunday:

i. Principles underlying this question.
   a. The whole of our time belongs to God. For,

   "Thine is the day, and Thine is the night." Ps. lxxiii. 16.

   He might therefore claim it all for Himself exclusively.
   b. The voice of nature bids us devote *some* of our time to God.
   All nations have observed days for sacred rites.
   c. Our only real work is the salvation of our souls.
   To it therefore we must give time, as to sleep, etc.
   d. We must honour God by befitting service.
   Hence the public observance of times given to God.

e. God expressly determines what time He requires of us.
Lest through worldly cares, etc. we forget it.
f. Though the particular day be changed, from the Sabbath to the Sunday, the principle remains —one day in seven.

ii. Means of sanctifying the Sunday:
a. As of obligation:
1. Hearing Mass.
2. Resting from servile works.
b. As of counsel:
1. Attending other Church services.
2. Hearing instruction.
3. Spiritual reading.
c. Honest recreation, within limits, not forbidden.

iii. Neglect of this sanctification a great evil:
a. A grievous sin of disobedience to God and His Church.
b. The sin of scandal and bad example.
c. A sort of sacrilege even, (desecration): Numb. xv. 35.
d. An injustice—robbing God of His glory.
e. Many evils flow from such neglect:
1. *Spiritual:* indifference, tepidity, loss of faith, etc.
2. *Temporal:* for God will not bless it.

Lessons:

i. Reflect seriously on this important matter.
Less and less thought of, as time goes on!

ii. Observe religiously the Sunday obligation.
God's blessings will rest upon it.

iii. See to children doing so:
a. The good habit early acquired will remain.
b. Neglect in early years, a fatal omission.

iv. Sunday is a social benefit, as well as a spiritual blessing.

v. If this law of God be duly observed, all His other laws will also be. While, if this be despised, so will they be.

178. QUALITIES OF RISEN BODIES.

"He showed them His hands and His side." Jn. xx. 20.

i. Our Lord preserved His wounds after the Resurrection.
   a. As proofs that His body was real, and truly risen.
   b. As trophies of His victory over death and His enemies.
   c. To excite confidence in us, as they plead with the Father.
   d. As arguments against the wicked, for their abuse of grace.

ii. We may consider here the quality of Risen Bodies: Very different, as seen in the Wicked or the Just:

I. In the Wicked:

i. *Passibility:*

"These shall go into everlasting punishment." Mth. xxv. 46.

The senses exquisitely capable of every form of pain.

ii. *Incorruptibility:*

"They shall desire to die, but death shall fly from them." Ap. ix. 6.

Continued existence, with all the pains of corruption, yet without the reality.

iii. *Deformity* the most horrible.

Showing in the body the abomination of the soul in sin.

II. In the Just:

i. *Impassibility*:

a. Incapability of feeling any pain or suffering.

"Death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor sorrow." Ap. xxi. 4.

"It is sown in corruption: it shall rise in incorruption." 1 Cor. xv. 42.

b. Yet retaining the perfection of the senses for joy.

Except perhaps the sense of taste.

ii. *Subtlety:*

a. The body sharing the spiritual existence of the soul.

"It is sown a natural body: it shall rise a spiritual body." 1 Cor. xv. 44.

b. Able to penetrate other bodies, as light and heat do.

Our Lord entering the room, the doors being closed: Jn. xx. 19.

iii. *Agility:*

a. Power of rapid motion with the soul.

"The just shall run to and fro, like sparks among the reeds." Wis. iii. 7.

"It is sown in weakness: it shall rise in power." 1 Cor. xv. 43.

b. Like the electric spark along the wire.

As Our Lord appeared from place to place.

iv. *Brightness:*

a. Externally shining as the stars, from the overflowing splendour of the soul.

Like diamonds in the sun, or iron heated in the fire.

"The just shall shine as the sun." Mth. xiii. 43.

"It is sown in dishonour: it shall rise in glory." 1 Cor. xv. 43.

b. In different degrees, according to merit.

"Star differeth from star: so also in the resurrection of the dead." 1 Cor. xv. 41.

c. Yet without envy or jealousy among the Blessed.

But with perfect peace and harmony.

Lessons:

i. Honour the body: abuse it not by sin.

ii. The Church respects the bodies of the dead.

As the temples of God, to be glorified hereafter.

iii. Solemnity of funerals, for the same motive.

iv. Blessing and consecration of cemeteries (dormitories).

v. Patience in suffering and death, in the hope of the Resurrection: Job xix. 25: 2 Mach. vii. 9.

vi. Take comfort, amid sorrow at the death of friends: 1 Thess. iv. 12.

179. THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

"I am the Good Shepherd." Jn. x. 11.

i. Our Lord to-day calls Himself the Good Shepherd. Name inspiring love, and showing forth His mercy.

ii. Consider now,

a. How He shows Himself a true shepherd.

b. What we owe to Him in return.

Our Lord a good shepherd:

i. He has the *qualities* of a good shepherd: *e.g.*

a. He is the Lord and owner of us all.

"He made us, and not we ourselves." Ps. xcix. 3.
"We are His people and the sheep of His pasture." *Ibid.*

b. He has infinite power and wealth, to protect and enrich His flock.

c. He is most loving and ready to do all for its welfare.

ii. He fulfils the *duties* of a good shepherd: *e.g.*

a. He knows and loves each of us:

He appreciates at their true value the souls He redeemed.

b. He leads us by His example along the thorny path of life.

In pastoral countries the shepherd precedes the flock.*

c. He guides us to the best pasture-lands: *e.g.*

1. The pure doctrines of Revelation.
2. The various Sacraments; especially,
3. His own Body and Blood, in the Holy Eucharist.

d. He protects us, and remains ever with us, by

1. The angels He sends to guard us.
2. The ministers of His Sanctuary.
3. His own Real Presence on the altar.

e. He defends us from the wolf and the serpent:
1. Warning us against
α. Bad books and evil company.
β. All dangerous occasions of sin.
2. Inspirations to appeal for help.
f. He seeks the straying sheep: by
1. The advice or rebuke of authority, though often resented.
2. The inspirations of His grace.
3. Some trial or other, often a blessing in disguise.

iii. Such the qualities and duties of the Good Shepherd of our souls!

What we owe in return:

i. Acknowledge Jesus as your shepherd, and rejoice to be of His flock.
ii. Love Him with your whole hearts:
a. Willingly hearing His voice and doctrine.
b. Readily obeying His every command: Jn. xiv.
iii. Trust His loving care and watchfulness.
iv. Invoke His aid, in danger and trial.
v. Accept the spiritual food He provides for the soul.
vi. Never leave His fold through infidelity, etc.
vii. Offer yourself and your all to Him,
As the sheep yield their wool and their lambs to the shepherd.
Health and wealth, even life, if He asks it.
viii. Thus will you truly be good members of His flock, and say:

"The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing: He hath set me in a place of pasture." Ps. xxii. 1, 2.

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* Our Saviour says that the good shepherd, when he putteth forth his own sheep, goeth before them, and they follow (Jn. x. 4): this is true to the letter yet, in pastoral countries. The sheep are trained to *follow* their keeper with docility, and not to stray away into the unfenced fields, that lie so temptingly on either side.

180. UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

"There shall be one fold and one shepherd." Jn. x. 16.

i. The Church of God has certain marks by which it is known.

ii. Unity is one of them:

Christ could not give two faiths, or leave two roads to Heaven.

iii. Three points in which this Unity consists.

I. All members agree in one Faith:

i. There is no difference in dogma and doctrine. But,

ii. Everywhere the same truths are taught and received by all.

iii. Every age has believed and handed down the same truths.

iv. All accept the same interpretation of Scripture and Tradition.

v. Learned and ignorant, peasant and king believe the same Creeds.

vi. All submit to the same rule of Morals; and

vii. The Church cuts off from her communion all whose belief differs from her own.*

II. All have the same Worship:

i. Always and everywhere.

ii. The same *Sacrifice* of the Mass, though externals differ: *e.g.:*

The Latin and Greek rites.

iii. The same *Sacraments*, seven in number.

iv. The same *Observances*, *e.g.:*

a. Lent and Advent, and penitential practices.

b. Days of Fasting and Abstinence.

c. Festivals and Holy Seasons.

v. The same *Devotions*, *e.g.:*

a. The Rosary of B.V.M.

b. The Way of the Cross.

c. Scapulars, Medals, Confraternities, etc.

III. **All united under one Head:**

i. See the order and harmony in the Church.
   a. Pope and Bishops, Priests and Faithful.
   b. As in the human frame: 1 Cor. xii. 12.
ii. All nations and classes, though differing in everything else, submit to this same authority.
iii. This Head is the Pope, Vicar of the Good Shepherd.
iv. Whose duties are:
   a. To feed the flock with the Word of Truth.
      1. The Lambs: Laity and Inferior Clergy.
      2. The Sheep: Bishops and Prelates.
   b. To guard them against danger of sin; or,
   c. To lead them to repentance, if fallen.
   d. To teach and instruct.
   e. To condemn error and false doctrine.
   f. To decide controversies.
v. Infallible, when teaching *ex cathedra* Faith or Morals.
   a. By the assistance of God, not precluding human industry.
   b. As seen from Scripture, Tradition, Reason, Vatican Council.
vi. Entitled to the love, reverence and obedience of the Faithful.

Lessons:

i. Admire this Unity of the Catholic Church.
ii. Thank God for being members of it.
iii. Fulfil your duties of loyalty and fidelity to it.
iv. Pray for the extension of the one Fold.
v. Honour the Good Shepherd in His visible representative.

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* As man by Baptism is made member of the Church, where there is communication of all spiritual goods, so by excommunication, cast forth from the Church, he becomes as a heathen and a publican, deprived of Sacrifice and Sacraments, etc., until he make amends and satisfy the Church.—*Soglia.*

181. CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

"I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." Jn. xvi. 22.

i. Though trials press around, we must have confidence in God.

ii. As with the Apostles, so with us, these words are full of comfort.

Motives for Confidence:

i. The authority of Our Lord Himself.

a. Wherever He finds confidence, He praises and approves: *e.g.*

The Centurion: Mth. viii. 10.

The issue of blood: *Ibid.* ix. 22.

The woman of Canaan: *Ibid.* xv. 28.

b. Wherever, diffidence, He condemns it: *e.g.*

The Apostles, in the storm: Mth. viii. 26.

S. Peter, on the waters: *Ibid.* xvi. 31.

c. He wills confidence to precede miracles: *e.g.*

Even the removing of mountains: Mth.xvii.19.

"All things are possible to him that believeth." Mrk. ix. 22.

ii. The attributes of God:

a. Omnipotence, which can do all things.

b. Wisdom, which knows all things.

c. Charity unlimited for man.

Which should inspire all confidence and trust.

iii. Examples from Holy Scripture:

Abraham, in sacrificing Isaac: Gen. xxii. 10.

David, before Goliath: 1 Kgs. xvii. 37, 45.

Blessed Virgin, at the marriage-feast: Jn. ii. 5.

iv. Examples of the Saints, strong in God:

Twelve poor fishermen converted the world.

S. Francis Xavier single-handed gained nations to God.

S. Teresa, though poor, built many convents.

Confidence gained by prayer:

i. Jesus is our friend of all times and in all needs.
A better friend never was.
ii. He never wearies of listening to our wants.
iii. He is God and knows all things: yet He wishes us to ask.
iv. Hence go to Him, especially in the Bl. Sacrament:
a. If sad, pour forth your troubles to Him.
b. If joyful, thank Him, and so sanctify your joy.
c. If in sin, show Him the wound, and ask for pardon.
d. If He delay your request, complain humbly, yet in resignation.
e. The more you ask, the more He rejoices to give. Remind Him of His promise: Mth. vii. 7.
f. Speak of your wants, your parents, friends, etc.
v. Thus will confidence gradually grow up within us.

Lessons:

i. From such considerations, learn great confidence in God.
Most pleasing to Him, therefore calculated to avail.
ii. We absolutely need it, for of ourselves we are nothing.
The ivy on the wall.*
Crossing a torrent.†
iii. Everything leads us to have confidence; and,
iv. Prayer to God will obtain it.

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* Ivy needs a stake or a wall, whereby to climb upwards; so human nature, weak and helpless of itself, must seek aid and support in God, by confidence in His perfections.

† No one crossing a torrent must look at the waters beneath, lest he turn giddy and fall, but must keep his eyes upraised; and whoever feels depressed at the thought of his sins, to avoid despair, must look in confidence at the mercy and goodness of God.

182. THE TRIALS OF LIFE.

"You shall be made sorrowful." Jn. xvi. 20.

i. When Our Lord was on earth, He was subject to sorrow and trial.

"A man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity." Is. liii. 3.

ii. He here forewarns His followers that they also shall be. For,

"The disciple is not above the master." Mth. x. 24.

iii. Consider that mysterious subject—the existence of evil.

The existence of Evil:

i. A great objection against the Providence of God. Yet,

ii. God wills only good, though He permits sin and evil.

a. Our free-will is not forced: Ecclus. xv. 18.

b. If we avoid sin, God will reward.

c. If we commit it, He will punish.

iii. The secrets of God must command our veneration.

iv. Thus irregularities of wealth, suffering, etc. need not bewilder us. For,

"How unsearchable His ways." Rom. xi. 33.

v. God rules all things, with infinite love and wisdom. Study the firmament, and see the works of creation.

vi. Why then murmur, if you suffer, while others may not do?

a. Say rather with Job: "The Lord gave," etc. Job i. 21.

b. So also did David comfort himself in trial: Ps. lxxii.

Sorrows and trials:

i. Permitted of God for our good: Ecclus. xi. 14.

ii. The punishment of sin: *e.g.*

In Adam and Eve: Gen. iii. 16—19.

In King David: 2 Kgs. xii. 14.

iii. The expiation of sin, if rightly borne.
  a. All have sins to atone for.
    Either here in mercy, or hereafter in justice.
  b. Chastisement here is really a mercy of God.
    For,
  c. Vengeance, if delayed, is all the heavier.

iv. A source of glory hereafter.

"Blessed are ye when they shall persecute you . . . your reward is very great." Mth. v. 11, 12.
"Our tribulation worketh an eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. iv. 17.

v. Withdraw the heart from things of earth.
  Tobias, struck blind: Tob. ii. 18.

vi. God draws good from evil: (patience, self-sacrifice).
  Joseph's persecution became the comfort of his family: Gen. l. 20.
  The murder of Christ, the salvation of souls.
  Many owe their conversion to affliction: *e.g.*
    S. Ignatius, and his wound: Jly. 31.
  Adversity and salvation are not far apart.

vii. Faith, conscience and grace, remedies and support in trial.

"Whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth." Prov. iii. 12.
"To them that love God, all things work together unto good." Rom. viii. 28.
"My grace is sufficient for thee." 2 Cor. xii. 9.

viii. The great judgment-day will show all this clearly!

Lessons:

i. Murmur not, if crosses be your lot.
  The King and the General.*

ii. Appeal to God for fortitude and patience.
  Then shall your sorrow be turned into joy.

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* If a King advance an officer to the command of an army in battle, where he will be exposed to danger, he is not thought to treat him ill, but to give him occasion for gaining glory and renown. So, in the eyes of Faith, crosses are a mark of divine favour to man.—*Archer.*

183. DEATH.

"Whither goest thou?" Jn. xvi. 5.

i. Each one may put to himself this question of the Gospel.

ii. As our Lord had to leave the earth, so must each of us.

iii. Death is the passage by which we enter eternity. And,

"It is appointed unto men once to die." Hebr. ix. 27.

Death:

i. Separation of the soul from the body; thus, the end
   a. Of time, and the beginning of eternity.
   b. Of ambitions, earthly joys, sorrows, etc.
   c. Of man's probation and trial.

ii. A consequence and punishment of sin; for,

"God created man incorruptible." Wisd. ii. 23.

iii. More than 80,000 die per day, the world over.

iv. One thing only is certain about death: it will come. A fearful thought, yet most salutary.

v. Everything else is uncertain, *e.g.*
   a. *Time* of Death: who can say?

"At what hour you think not, the Son of Man will come." Lke. xii. 40.

1. In childhood, youth or old age?
2. Shortly, or many years hence?
3. In summer, or in winter?
4. In the daytime, or at night?
5. Yet some Saints have known beforehand the day of their death.
   S. Philip: May 26.
   S. Aloysius: June 21.
   S. Teresa: Oct. 15.

b. *Place* of Death: who can tell?
1. At home, or abroad?
2. On the railway, or at sea?
3. In bed, at table, in Church, or in the Street?

c. *Manner* of Death: who can say?
1. Suddenly, or after a warning sickness?
2. Naturally, or by accident?
18,000 violent deaths per annum, in England.
3. From this disease, or that?
4. With the priest, or without the sacraments?
5. Conscious, or unconscious?

vi. The world banishes the very name of death, coffin, etc. But the Saints kept them ever in mind.*

vii. We must remember our coming death:
a. To resist temptation and sin.
b. To be ready, no matter when it comes.
c. To detach our hearts from the earth. For, In death, all must be left behind.

viii. Temptations often strong in death: *e.g.*
a. To impatience, despair, unbelief.
b. To the predominant passion.

Conclusion: Prepare for Death, by
i. A good life, the only real preparation.
ii. Practical devotion to:
a. The Blessed Virgin, and Angel Guardian.
b. S. Joseph, patron of a happy death.
c. S. Barbara, for the grace of the last Sacraments.
d. S. Andrew Avellino, against sudden death.

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* S. John the Almoner had a tomb opened for himself—Many Saints kept a skull beside them, to remind them of death—The Trappists keep an open grave, ready for the next death among them.

184. DEVOTION TO THE HOLY GHOST.

i. To-day the Gospel already reminds us of the coming of the Holy Ghost.

ii. Hence, prepare even now in thought for Pentecost.
  a. Too seldom do we think of the Holy Spirit.
  b. Perhaps, because His operations are secret, as the earth's motion is silent.

iii. Yet, we owe Him worship, as to the Father and Son.
  a. If you need information on astronomy, etc. you consult astronomers, etc.
  b. So now consult the teachers of Divine Science on

Devotion to the Holy Ghost:

i. *God Himself*, to teach it, has written two great books:
  a. The universe:
    The Heavens, the Earth, the Seas, all speak of Him, their Creator.
  b. The Bible:
    1. The Old Testament names Him some 150 times.
    2. The New Testament, over 200 times.
    3. Revealing His role in the creation and government of the World.
    4. Preaching the duty of men and angels to praise and adore Him.

ii. *Our Lord* teaches the same in word and deed:
  a. What the Baptist was to Him, He seems to be to the Holy Ghost.
  b. On becoming Man, He wills that
    1. His Holy Mother should be the Spouse of the Holy Ghost.
    2. His own Body should be formed by the operation of the Same.
  c. During life, He seems ever dependent on Him:
    By Him, He was led into the desert: Mth.iv.1.
    By Him, He cast forth devils: *Ibid.* xii. 28.
    By Him, He offered Himself unspotted to God: Heb. ix. 14.
  d. He defends the rights of the Holy Spirit, seeming to forget His own: Mth. xii. 32.

e. He leaves all that is dearest to Himself on earth.
Lest His continued presence prevent the coming of the Paraclete: Jn. xvi. 7.

iii. *The Apostles:*
a. Formed by the Holy Ghost Himself, by His fulness do they speak.
Before converts and persecutors, in writing and discourse, He is their theme.
b. They leave the poor to deacons, to preach and give the Holy Ghost: Acts vi.
c. Their very vocation is to oppose Satan and make him yield to the Spirit of God.
d. This they go forth throughout the world to do.
Especially S. Paul: *e.g.* Eph. iv. 30; 1 Thess. v. 19; Gal. v. 16.
e. Thus do they all become men of the Holy Ghost.
Their preaching, miracles, death imply Him given to souls.
f. Now preservation of beings is a continuation of their creation.
1. The Christian World was formed by the Holy Spirit.
2. To remain Christian, let it be faithful to the principle of its origin.

iv. *The Church:*
a. The teachings of her Doctors and Saints.
b. The sign of the Cross so often used.
c. A special feast of the Holy Spirit: Pentecost.
d. Invocation of the Holy Ghost on important occasions: *e.g.*
In Conclave, Ordinations, Councils, etc.
e. Such some means used by the Church to remind us of the Holy Ghost.

Lessons:

i. Thus do we owe adoration to the Holy Spirit.
ii. Cultivate or revive devotion to Him.
iii. Prepare for the coming festival of Pentecost.
iv. Invoke His light and guidance in time of doubt and difficulty.

185. PRAYER.

"Ask and you shall receive." Jn. xvi. 24.

i. Prayer is the raising up of mind and heart to God.
A chief means of grace, suitable to all circumstances.

ii. Our Lord here inculcates the duty of prayer:
A subject of personal interest to each one.

Necessity of Prayer:

i. Grounded on two truths, viz.:
a. Without God's help we can do nothing for salvation: Jn. xv. 5.
b. Prayer is the ordinary means of obtaining grace: Mth. vii. 7.

ii. Inculcated in Scripture:
"Watch ye, praying at all times." Lke. xxi. 36.
"Be instant in prayer." Col. iv. 2.
"Pray without ceasing." 1 Thess. v. 17.

iii. Example of Christ and His Saints:
Our Lord on the mountain at night: Mth. xiv. 23: Lke. vi. 12.
The Apostles persevered in prayer: Acts i. 14.
David prayed seven times a day: Ps. cxviii. 164.
Daniel, at three stated times a day: Dan. vi. 10.
S. Patrick: Mch. 17.
S. Alphonsus: Aug. 2.
S. Bruno: Oct. 6.

iv. Without prayer, Salvation cannot be expected.

Persons who may pray:

i. The *Just:*
a. Whose prayer has great power with God. Jas. v. 16.
b. For their own perseverance, etc.
c. For the wants of others.
Moses for his people: Ex. xxxii.

ii. *Sinners:*
  a. Well disposed and desiring to amend.
  b. God in which case will show mercy.
    The Publican: Lke. xviii.
    The good Thief: Lke. xxiii. 42.
iii. We all belong to one of these classes:
  Hence all may pray: a consoling thought, indeed!

Objects for Prayer:

i. *Spiritual* goods: *e.g.*
  a. Perseverance.
  b. Victory over temptation.
    Example of S. Paul: 2 Cor. xii. 8.
  c. A vocation, or some virtue.
ii. *Temporal* blessings, subject to God's will.
  Anna, for a son: 1 Kgs. i. 11.
  Elias, for rain: 3 Kgs. xviii. 45.
  Ezechias, for recovery: 4 Kgs. xix.
  S. James urges the same: v. 15.
iii. *Persons* (ourselves and others):

"Pray for one another, that you may be saved." Jas. v. 16.

  a. Relatives and friends.
  b. Superiors and inferiors.
  c. Sinners; enemies.
  d. Souls in Purgatory.

Lessons:

i. Fail not in this essential duty of prayer: *e.g.*
  Morning and evening: on Sundays: in temptation, etc.
ii. Prayer is equal to all our needs and wants.
iii. Give it the qualities, that make it pleasing to God and effectual.
  Then will your prayer be heard: and you will receive, as you ask.

186. QUALITIES OF PRAYER.

"Hitherto you have not asked in My name." Jn. xvi. 24.

i. We ask not in Christ's name, if we ask amiss.

ii. Our prayer must therefore have certain qualities, viz.:

Qualities of Prayer:

i. *Attention:*

a. Free from wilful distractions.

"This people with their lips glorify Me, but their heart is far from Me." Is. xxix. 13.

b. Otherwise our prayer becomes sinful and unavailing.

c. Hence the need of proper time, place, posture, etc. for prayer.

Especially necessary, in the case of children.

d. Purgatory lengthened by negligence in this matter.

ii. *Humility:*

"The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds." Ecclus. xxxv. 21.

"God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble." Jas. iv. 6.

a. Acknowledgment of our nothingness, and entire dependence on God.

b. A quality which especially attracts God's benevolence.

The Centurion: Mth. viii. 8.

The Publican: Lke. xviii. 13.

iii. *Confidence:*

a. Trust in the power and goodness of God.

b. Further quality most pleasing to Him.

The Canaanite woman: Mth. xv. 22.

S. Scholastica's visit to her brother: Feb. 10.

iv. *Resignation:*

"Not My will, but Thine be done." Lke. xxii. 42.

a. Leaving our petition entirely in God's hands, who knows best.

b. Without murmurs, if our request be not granted as asked.

c. In any case, our prayer if not granted will be rewarded in some way.

The three children: Dan. iii. 18.

Our Lord in His Agony.

v. *Perseverance:*

a. Assiduity in prayer.

b. Without discouragement, if not immediately heard: Lke. xviii. 1.

c. God sometimes wishes to try our earnestness.

d. It is not for us to say *when* He shall grant our petition.

Abraham's prayer for Sodom: Gen. xviii.

The importunate friend: Lke. xi. 8.

S. Monica for her son: May 4.

So we, for England's conversion, etc.

Lessons:

i. Examine whether your prayers lack these qualities.*

Which may account for their poor results!

ii. Always have some object to pray for—a special intention.

Otherwise prayers soon become routine.

a. A great aid towards giving it its proper qualities.

b. Hence always make an intention before Mass, Communion, &c.

iii. Strive thus to pray truly in Christ's name.

Then shall you receive, and your joy will be full.

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* S. Bernard once saw an angel writing down the divine praises of his brethren, as they recited the office in choir. Some were written in letters of gold, denoting great fervour; some in silver, expressing pure intention; others in ink, implying sloth; others in water, showing absence of all piety; while some were not written down at all, but instead, the words: "their heart is far from Me," to signify God was most displeased with such prayer.—*Muller.*

187. HEAVEN OUR GOAL.

i. Our Lord to-day ascended to Heaven, the reward of His labours.
ii. This reward, the goal which we also must aim at.
iii. Our Lord tells us this, and also shows the means to do it.

Christ tells us Heaven is our goal:

i. By His *Words:*

"I go to prepare a place for you." Jn. xiv. 2.
"I will that where I am, they also may be." Jn. xvii. 24.
"To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne." Apoc. iii. 21.

a. What words could be more clear than these?
b. What promises more consoling?
c. Heaven then must be the object of our aim, as shown also

ii. By remarkable *Facts:*

a. Five hundred disciples witness the Ascension of Our Lord.
As though to put it beyond the possibility of doubt.
b. A cloud received Him out of sight: Acts i. 9.
1. The ordinary accompaniment of the Divinity.
2. Realizing the words of the Royal Prophet:
"Who makest the clouds Thy chariot." Ps. ciii. 3.
c. Angels announce His entry into Heaven: Acts i. 10, 11.
Such facts confirm Our Lord's words: and He encourages us also

iii. By *material proofs:*

a. The marks of His feet, left on the rock whence He ascended.
b. The impossibility of covering them over.*
c. The very feast of to-day, instituted by the Apostles themselves.
Clearly showing the thought of Heaven, as its object.

Christ shows us the means of reaching Heaven:

i. By His *Words:* Lke. ix. 23.
  a. Self-denial:
    1. Renouncing our own wishes and desires.
    2. Submission of Intellect and Will to God.
    3. Mortification, a preservative against sin.
      As salt is, against corruption in food.
  b. Carrying the Cross cheerfully:
    1. Each one has his own cross in life:
      From friend or foe, poverty or sickness, etc.
    2. If we refuse one cross, we may find a heavier.
  c. Following Christ, by
    1. Imitating His hidden life.
    2. Practising the Christian virtues.
    3. The spirit of self-sacrifice.
ii. By His *Example:*
  a. He ascended from the very place of His previous humiliations.
    As though showing that trial and triumph go together.
  b. Nothing so encourages the army, as the example of the General.

Lessons:

i. Walk in the path, thus shown by Our Saviour.
  He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life: Jn. xiv. 6.
ii. This we promised in Baptism to do: then,
iii. As He is our only Redeemer, so will He be our eternal Reward.

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* When S. Helen, in the 4th c. built a Church over the place whence our Lord ascended to Heaven, never could they succeed in laying a stone upon the traces of His sacred feet in the rock, nor in closing the roof over them, which at that point ever remained open to the Heavens above—facts attested by S. Jerome, S. Augustine and others, worthy of every credence.

188. THE ASCENSION.

"Jesus . . . was taken up to Heaven." Mrk. xvi. 19.

i. Ascension Day one of the greater feasts of the year. Commemorating the re-opening of Heaven to man.
ii. Our Lord's Ascension, prefigured in Elias: 4 Kgs. ii. 11.
iii. Worthy of due celebration and consideration.

Jesus taken up:

i. By His own divine power, as able to do all things. After blessing His Holy Mother and the Disciples.
ii. From Mount Olivet, near the scene of His humiliations.
  a. Facing Europe, as when dying. As seen from the impress of His feet on the rock.
  b. The pilgrim's death.*
iii. Body and Soul together.
  a. Reunited for ever in His Resurrection.
  b. Thus is our human nature raised to the pinnacle of glory.
iv. Accompanied by the souls from Limbo:
  a. Glorious procession of the Saints of the Old Law.
  b. Procession still continuing of souls from Earth and Purgatory.
v. Yet He still remains with us:

"I will not leave you orphans." Jn. xiv. 18.

  a. In the *Church* He had established: Mth.xxviii.20.
  b. In the *Sacrament* of His Love: Jn. vi. 52.
  c. In His *Vicar*, the supreme Pontiff: Mth. xvi. 18.
  d. In our *Souls*, by His grace: Jn. xiv. 23.

Sitteth:

i. Not denoting posture, impossible in God.
ii. But implying:
  a. The dignity of the Son of God, equal to the Father.
  b. The royal and judicial powers of Christ.
  c. Unchanging repose and beatitude.
  d. The throne befitting His sovereignty.

On the right hand:

i. Not that God has hands, for He is a pure spirit.
ii. But denoting the place of honour.
  King Solomon and his mother: 3 Kgs. ii. 19.
iii. Christ, as Man, has the second throne in Heaven.
  As Joseph was next to Pharao in Egypt: Gen.xli.40.
iv. Christ has the highest place in Heaven, above every creature.

The Ascension is, in regard to

i. *God:* the perfecting of the end of His creation of Man.
ii. *Our Lord:* an act of restitution and reward: (glory for shame).
iii. The *Church:* the cause of
  a. The coming of the Holy Ghost: Jn. xvi. 7.
  b. The Real Presence in the Blessed Sacrament.
iv. *Man:*
  a. A revival of his hope of Heaven.
  b. A motive for virtue and good works.
  c. A comfort in trial: *sursum corda!*

Lessons:

i. Congratulate Our Lord on His magnificent triumph.
ii. The Ascension should strengthen our Faith, Hope and Charity.
iii. Prepare now for Pentecost, like the Apostles.

* S. Bernardine tells of a pilgrim who visited Mt. Olivet to behold the last traces of his Redeemer on earth, and who, while prostrate on the ground, kissing with love the sacred footprints, died there, his soul winging her flight from that very spot to the embraces of Him she had so ardently loved.—*Butler.*

189. BEARING TESTIMONY TO CHRIST.

"Ye shall give testimony." Jn. xv. 27.

i. To give testimony to Christ is to bear witness, that
  a. He is what He claims to be—God and man, the Messiah.
  b. The Gospel is His Word.
  c. The Church and Sacraments, His work.
ii. The Apostles bore this testimony, in season, out of season.
iii. So must we, as their followers, do in like manner.

The Apostles gave testimony: by

i. Their *Preaching:*
  a. S. Peter, on the day of Pentecost: Acts ii. 40.
  b. The others, in various lands.
  c. Fulfilling the word of the Royal Prophet, A.C. 1,000.

"Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth." Ps. xviii. 5.

ii. Their *Miracles:*
  a. After Pentecost, the Apostles became wonder-workers: *e.g.*
    1. The gift of tongues: Acts ii. 4.
    2. Healing sickness and disease: *Ibid.* iii. 6: ix. 34, 40.
    3. Their converting the world is a miracle.
iii. Their *Blood:*
  a. The Apostles died in defence of Revelation:
    S. Peter, crucified head downwards: June 29.
    S. James the Greater, beheaded: Jly. 25.
    S. Andrew, on a cross: Nov. 30.
  b. So of the others: all died for their Master.
  c. The Church acknowledges this; for,
    1. She honours them as Martyrs, *i.e.* witnesses; and,
    2. Presents them to the Faithful as models and patrons.

We also must give testimony: by

i. Our *Words:*
   - *a.* Professing our belief in Christ and His teaching.
   - *b.* Praising His great mercies to men.
   - *c.* Teaching men to know Him and His work.

ii. Our *Conduct:*
   - *a.* Conforming our lives to His maxims.*
   - *b.* Practising the virtues He commends.
   - *c.* Ever proving ourselves His true disciples.

iii. Our *Spirit of Sacrifice:*
   - *a.* In the Martyrs it meant giving their lives for the Faith.
   - *b.* God may not ask this of us: we are unworthy of it.
   - *c.* But He does ask us to sacrifice
     1. Our evil inclinations.
     2. Our human respect, and self-will.
     3. Something of our means, our time, etc.
   - *d.* Opportunities for this are never wanting.

Lessons:

i. At the Judgment Day, Christ will demand an account of us.
   If we do not bear Him testimony, we shall be cast out.

ii. They do not bear witness to Christ,
   - *a.* Who, though baptized, do not acknowledge the Faith.
   - *b.* Who, though Catholics, never enter Church: or,
   - *c.* Who attend Mass, only on special occasions!
   - *d.* Who curse, or drink, or steal.

iii. If in the past you have failed, begin even now to serve God.

iv. Raise your hearts to Heaven, an encouragement to persevere!

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* There would be no heathens, were we such Christians as we ought to be. Paul was but a man, yet how many did he draw after him! If we were all such as he, how many worlds might we bring to give testimony to God.—*S. Chrysostom.*

190. PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH.

"Whoso killeth you will think that he doth a service to God." Jn. xvi. 2.

i. Our Lord foretells sorrows to His Church and His followers.
ii. Reflect on the truth and meaning of this.

Persecutions:

i. Ever the lot of the Church, somewhere or other.
ii. The ten great persecutions under the Roman Emperors.
   a. For 300 years, from Nero to Diocletian: A.D. 64—312.
   b. Some 200,000 Martyrs in Rome alone. The Colosseum—The Catacombs.
   c. Millions of martyrs throughout the Empire in those years.
iii. Other persecutions in other parts of the world: *e.g.* Under King Sapor, in Persia: A.D. 343.
iv. In succeeding ages also: *e.g.*
   The penal laws in England, 16th c. English Martyrs.
   Persecution in Japan, 17th c.
   Kulturkampf in Germany recently.
   Catholic missions in Asia and Africa now-a-days.
   Captivity of the Roman Pontiffs.
v. Wherever persecuted, there the Church thrives and gathers strength.
   a. Truly the blood of Martyrs is the seed of Christians: *Tertullian.*
   b. Only a divine institution could withstand such onslaughts.
vi. Persecutors of the Church usually end badly.*

Permitted:

i. That Our Lord's followers may resemble Him. For,

"The disciple is not above the master." Mth. x. 24.
"If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." Jn. xv. 20.

ii. To prove the elect:
  a. Trials show what a man is made of
  b. As gold is tried and purified by fire: Wisd.iii.6.
iii. To make virtue shine forth, and to manifest God's power.
  a. The more the thurible swings, the more is its fragrance scattered.
  b. The more the Church is tried, the more is God's love tested.
iv. That Our Lord's followers may trust in God, and God only.

"I am with him in tribulation." Ps. xc. 15.
"Call upon Me in the day of trouble." Ps. xlix. 15.

v. To teach us that all must be sacrificed to salvation. Eternity with God is the highest good, to which all else must yield.
vi. Whosoever is not tried unto blood will have other trials: *e.g.*
  a. Daily toil and suffering.
  b. Temptations, or dryness of soul.
    S. Jerome, S. Teresa, etc.
  c. Opposition from the tongues of men.
    As most of the Saints found.
  d. Sickness, poverty, failure, etc.

Lessons:

i. Be not surprised at the trials of the Church, thus foretold.
ii. Lose not confidence therein, for
  a. The gates of Hell shall never prevail: Mth. xvi. 18.
  b. Help will not be wanting to those who ask it.
iii. Our own trials will not last, and one day will turn into joy: Jn. xvi. 20.

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* Nero, after a life of unheard of cruelties, had to fly from Rome, and then committed suicide—Domitian was stabbed to death, while reading a letter—Julian was pierced by an arrow in battle—Valerian, taken prisoner, had to bend his back to enable Sapor to mount his horse, and after death his skin was tanned and hung up in a temple, an eternal monument of Roman dishonour—Bismarck died in disgrace.

191. RECEIVING THE HOLY GHOST.

"The Holy Ghost whom the Father will send." Jn. xiv. 26.

i. Pentecost, one of the greatest feasts, commemorating the descent of the Holy Ghost.
Feast instituted by the Apostles themselves.

ii. It not only commemorates, but renews it, though in different form.

iii. Hence see how the *Apostles* received the Spirit, and how *we* should.

The Apostles received the Holy Ghost.

i. After waiting and expectation in prayer.
"Stay you in the city, till you be endued with power from on high." Lke. xxiv. 49.
"All these were persevering in prayer." Acts i. 14.

ii. On the morning of Pentecost, about the third hour:
a. The Israelites received the law of *fear*, on Sina, 50 days after leaving Egypt.
b. The Apostles received the law of *love*, on Sion, 50 days after the Resurrection.

iii. Effects in the Apostles:
a. They were filled with the Holy Ghost, according to the measure of God's grace.
1. In *Intellect*, to know and believe all truth.
2. In *Heart*, to possess all Christian virtues.
3. In *Will*, to face all danger with courage.
4. In *Talent:* eloquence, the gift of tongues, power in word and deed.
S. Peter, and the 3,000 converts: Acts ii. 41.
S. Peter, and the lame man: *Ibid.* iii. 7.
b. They were changed to other men:
1. *Suddenly*, without laborious process.
Which is easy to the power of God.
2. *Perfectly:*
a. Men now according to God's own heart.
β. Yet not dispensed from personal care and effort. For,
Virtue needs cultivating, in order to fructify.
c. Thus changed, the Apostles
1. Do great things for God, throughout the earth.
2. Persevere, even to the death of martyrdom

How we must receive Him:

i. Poor we also may and must receive the same Holy Spirit.
   a. According to the measure of the giving of Christ: Eph. iv. 7.
   b. Measure always generous, if there be no obstacles in the way.

ii. Like the Apostles, though with accidental differences, *e.g.*
   a. They were changed suddenly: we slowly and by degrees.
   b. They received Him as a burning flame: we, as a spark to be fanned.
   c. To them He was as a fruit-laden tree: to us, as a seed to be cultivated.

iii. Like the Apostles, by preparing ourselves: *e.g.*
   a. They retired to an upper room in Jerusalem: Acts i. 13.
      We may withdraw awhile into solitude and reflection.
   b. They were persevering in prayer—the first novena.
      We must earnestly petition the Holy Ghost.
   c. Mary, Mother of Jesus, was with them: Acts i. 14.
      Let us offer our prayers through her.

iv. Manifesting the gifts and fruits of the Spirit.

"By their fruits you shall know them." Mth. vii. 20.

As worldlings show forth the spirit of the world.

v. Remove obstacles to the presence of the Holy Ghost: *e.g.*
   a. Dissipation of mind.
   b. Attachment to earthly things.
   c. Contempt of things divine.
      The sensual man cannot perceive the things of God: 1 Cor. ii. 14.

vi. The greater our efforts herein, the greater the fruit we gain.

Thus, each Whit Sunday truly renews the first day of Pentecost.

192. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

"The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost." Jn. xiv. 26.

i. On Pentecost the Holy Ghost came down on the Apostles.
ii. Each year, He will come also to us, if prepared for Him.
iii. Consider the Holy Spirit in three aspects, with His seven gifts.

I. **Spirit of Truth,** illuminating the INTELLECT against error:

i. *Knowledge:*
   a. Discernment of temporal things, in reference to salvation.
   b. Proper use of creatures.
   c. Predisposition to see and love the truth.
   d. Through lack of it, scientists deny the existence of God.
   e. Assistance to interpret the Law of God.

ii. *Understanding:*
   a. Cures our ignorance of things spiritual.
   b. Power of penetrating the hidden meaning of mysteries.
      As a lens to the eye, in Scriptures, sermons, etc.
   c. Enables Doctors and Teachers to defend the Revelation of God.
   d. Reduces this Revelation to a science—Theology. Dogmatic: Moral: Ascetic: Mystical.

iii. *Wisdom:*
   a. Appreciation of heavenly things.
      The blossom and perfection of all the Gifts.
   b. Influences the Intellect, the Passions, the Affections.
   c. Foundation of Fear, without which it has no stability: Prov. i. 7.

II. **Spirit of Holiness,** cleansing the HEART from corruption.

iv. *Fear of God:*
   a. Restrains from sinful pleasure.

b. Filial and reverential towards God, as a Father.
c. Giving a hatred and horror of all sin.
As in S. Alphonsus, S. Rose, etc.

v. *Piety:*
a. Disposition to serve God with tenderness and devotion: *e.g.*
Tobias; the Patriarchs.
b. A help to the practice of all religious duties.
c. Zeal for the glory of God: *e.g.*
David; Solomon; Church Ritual.

vi. *Counsel:*
a. Discernment between spiritual and carnal impulses.
b. Readiness to do the better thing: 1 Cor. vi. 12.
In Pleasure; Church services; Use of time and means.
c. Discretion.
d. Light in Confessors to distinguish sin from sin.

III. **Spirit of Strength,** inflaming the WILL to resist attack.

vii. *Fortitude:*
a. Endurance in persecution, penance, poverty.
b. Firmness against evil.
c. Courage before the World.
d. Perseverance in virtue.

Lessons:

i. Seek to obtain such precious and necessary Gifts.
ii. Only pure souls can receive them.*
iii. Pray the Holy Spirit this day to enkindle them in your heart.
iv. Revive your fervour on the anniversary of your Confirmation.

* When the body of the Emperor Caligula was being cremated according to custom, the fire seemed unable to affect the heart, which was found to contain a certain poison, neutralizing the action of the fire: when the poison was extracted, the heart was consumed. It was not the fire that failed: all depended on the state of the heart. Wo to us, if the fire of the Holy Spirit take no hold on us! The poison of sin in the heart can alone paralyze that divine flame.—*Suetonius.*

193. THE BLESSED TRINITY.

"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Mth. xxviii. 19.

i. The Blessed Trinity the deepest of all mysteries.
ii. All must know and believe it, even though not understanding it.
iii. A few points in connection with it.

The Blessed Trinity:

i. Three divine persons in one God.
   a. The *Father*, unbegotten principle of the other two.
   b. The *Son*, begotten of the Father from all eternity.
   c. The *Holy Ghost*, proceeding from both, without succession of time.
ii. Only obscurely known in the Old Testament: *e.g.* Gen. iii. 22. Because,
   a. Its clear teaching was reserved to the Son Incarnate.
   b. The New Law is more perfect than the Old.
   c. The danger of polytheism thus removed from the Jews.
iii. Clearly taught in the New Testament: *e.g.*
   a. In Our Lord's command to baptize: Mth. xxviii. 19.
   b. At His own Baptism: Mth. iii. 16, 17.
   c. Our Lord's promise of the Paraclete: Jn. xiv. 16.
   d. The triple testimony: 1 Jn. v. 7.
iv. Taught by the Church:
   a. In her Creeds and symbols of Faith.
   b. In the administration of the Sacraments.
   c. In the Doxology, and Sign of the Cross.
   d. In her condemnation of heresy on the point.
   e. By the Fathers and Holy Writers.
v. Necessary to be known:
   a. It is one of the four Great Truths. Moreover,
   b. It is fitting we should know here the object of our future joy.

c. Without it, our knowledge of the Redemption must be imperfect.

d. It makes us humble, through knowledge of God's infinite perfections.

vi. Model of the duties we owe to:

a. God:

1. The Blessed Trinity is for ever holy.
2. To adore God worthily, we must be holy.

"Be holy, because I am holy." Lev. xi. 44.

3. There is no holiness we may not attain to by grace.

b. Our neighbour:

1. The Blessed Trinity is the essence of love.
2. To fulfil the Law, we must also love our neighbour: Jn. xiii. 35.
3. Zeal for souls, stamped with the image of the Trinity.

War-cry of S. Francis.*

c. Ourselves:

1. The Blessed Trinity is the perfection of self-respect.
2. Each one may say: "I am the image of the Trinity."
3. Hence respect for that image in our souls, which sin destroys.

Lessons:

i. Gratitude to the Blessed Trinity: viz.

a. Father, for creating *us* in preference to so many others.

b. Son, for redeeming our souls from sin.

c. Holy Ghost, for sanctifying us by His grace.

ii. Observe the Sunday, day sacred to the Triune God.

iii. Say or sing the *Gloria Patri* with fervour and love.

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* Nothing more famous than the words of S. Francis Xavier: "O most holy Trinity," by which he excited himself to the gigantic war against paganism in India. When he considered the image of the Blessed Trinity disfigured by sin in the souls of men, nothing could stay his zeal in endeavouring to repair it by instruction, penance and Baptism.—*Gaume.*

194. MERCIFULNESS.

"Be ye merciful." Lke. vi. 36.

i. God is charity, and the whole Christian law is Charity: Rom. xiii. 10.
ii. To appreciate its value, consider some motives for practising it.
iii. Mercifulness is strongly commended by

I. The voice of Nature itself:

i. When you meet a poor man, the voice of nature tells you he is a brother.
ii. When you see a rich man generous, does he not appear worthy of praise?
iii. When you find a rich man miserly, do you not think him most worthy of blame?
iv. When you find all Nature bestowing its gifts on you, have you not an interior feeling that *you* should do in like manner?
v. This is the voice of nature and conscience, dictating Charity to you.

II. The voice of God:

i. The words of Scripture:

"Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor close thy hand." Deut. xv. 7.
"Beware lest thou turn away thy eyes from thy poor brother." *Ibid.* 9.
"Blessed are the merciful." Mth. v. 7.
"Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful." Lke. vi. 36.

ii. Examples:

God's early promise of a Redeemer: Gen. iii. 15.
His miracles in Egypt and the Desert.
Our Lord's miracles among His people.
God's daily Providence ruling the world.
His readiness to receive and pardon sinners.

iii. God is the father and the friend of the poor and needy.

III. The Fathers and the Saints:

i. All the Fathers repeat and develop the words of Christ: "Give alms." Lke. xii. 33.

ii. The Saints and holy men ever put them into practice: *e.g.*
Tobias i. 20.
Cornelius, the centurion: Acts x. 2.
S. John, the Almoner: Jan. 23.
S. Elizabeth, her alms turning to roses: Jly. 8.
S. Vincent of Paul: Jly. 19.
iii. Charity in its varied forms, a characteristic of all the Saints.*

IV. **Its own excellence:**

"Fasting is as silver, but charity as gold."

i. The charitable man is like to the Angels, or even to God Himself.
ii. He that has mercy on the poor lends to the Lord: Prov. xix. 17.
iii. Whoso gives to the poor gives to Christ: Mth. xxv. 40.

V. **Its fruits:**

i. It draws down divine blessings both in time and eternity.
ii. It blots out sin: Prov. x. 12.
iii. The source of gladness and joy of heart.
iv. The seed of great future reward.
The cup of cold water: Mth. x. 42.
v. The pledge of a happy death and favourable judgment.

VI. **Its very necessity:**

i. Charity and mercy commanded of God: Lke. vi. 36.
ii. Why are so many souls lost? Through lack of it!
"I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat." Mth. xxv. 42.
iii. God's mercy is necessary for us:
"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Mth. v. 7.
"Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy." Jas. ii. 13.
iv. The rich shall be saved through almsdeeds. Lke. xvi. 9.

See here food for reflection and self-examination!

* There is no sentence so much abused, as "Charity begins at home"—the favourite apothegm of the hard-hearted and penurious, who employ it as an excuse for their want of generosity, and as a cloak for selfishness.

195. EFFECTS OF HOLY COMMUNION.

"My flesh is meat . . . My blood is drink." Jn. vi. 56.

i. This most beautiful Feast, to honour the ever blessed Sacrament.

ii. Consider some of its effects, in those who worthily receive it: it is

I. The life of our souls. Jn. vi. 58.

i. Divine grace the supernatural life of the soul.
Figure of this bread of life: the tree of life in Eden: Gen. ii. 9.

ii. The Holy Eucharist gives sanctifying grace like all the Sacraments.

iii. Its sacramental grace is special help to *live* by Christ, by
- *a.* Weakening concupiscence.
- *b.* Cooling the passions, sanctifying body and soul.
- *c.* Giving spiritual joy and piety.
- *d.* Producing a likeness to Christ, in humility, meekness, etc.

iv. Because it is our life, we are bound to receive it.

II. The food of our souls:

i. Figure of this spiritual food, the Manna: Ex. xvi. 15.

The *Manna:*	The *Holy Eucharist:*
a. Was food for the body.	*a.* Is spiritual food to the soul.
b. Fell from the clouds.	*b.* Our Lord came from Heaven.
Panem de cœlo præstitisti eis.	
c. Was for God's people only.	*c.* Only for members of the Church.
d. Had every taste.	*d.* Contains all graces.
Omne delectamentum in se habentem.	
e. Fell only in the desert.	*e.* Only during our sojourn on earth.
f. Ceased in the land of promise.	*f.* Will cease in Heaven, our home.

ii. Because our food, we are bound to receive it.

III. **Strength in temptation:**

i. The destroying angel spared the houses marked with the blood of the Lamb: Ex. xii. 23.
ii. The devil loses power over souls, sprinkled with the blood of Christ.
iii. Holy Communion does not remove temptation, but gives strength to resist.
iv. The world is as a fire, and a very network of temptation.
The children in the fiery furnace: Dan. iii.

IV. **Union with Our Lord:**

"He abideth in Me and I in him." Jn. vi. 57.

i. Illustrated by the blending of two pieces of wax.
ii. Thus our acts become of great merit, done in union with Christ.
iii. This union intensifies the reality of our relationship to Mary.
iv. Friendship rests on ties of blood, or of spirit.
a. In the *Incarnation*, Our Lord is united in blood to the human race.
b. In the *Eucharist*, He is united spiritually to individual souls.
v. Who could believe it, did not Truth itself so declare it.

V. **Germ of Glory:**

"I will raise him up in the last day." Jn. vi. 55.

i. By worthy Communion,
a. The *soul* grows in grace, the seed of glory;
b. The *body* becomes part of Christ's, to which glory is due: Eph. v. 30.
ii. The Eucharist gives right and title to a glorious resurrection.
iii. Hence the Church's anxiety as to First Communion.

What powerful motives to make us value Holy Communion, and lead us to receive it frequently and worthily!

196. THE REAL PRESENCE.

"This is the bread that came down from Heaven." Jn. vi. 59.

i. For nineteen centuries the Church has ever taught the Real Presence.

ii. To-day a suitable occasion to examine this doctrine.

Taught by Our Lord:

i. After feeding the multitude He begins to unfold this dogma: Jn. vi. 48—67.

a. Herein He refers to the wondrous Manna. Of this we know the various qualities, etc.

b. He then declares He will give something greater.

Any bread surpassing the Manna must be wondrous indeed!

ii. His future gift was not to be inert, but *living* bread. He frequently asserts it to be His own flesh and blood.

iii. The Jews found this hard to accept, and many left Him: Jn. vi. 53, 67.

a. Apart from charity, honesty required Our Lord to correct them, if they misunderstood Him.

b. Yet He only insists the more, on what He had said: Jn. vi. 54.

c. He would not allow the Apostles to be misled, on a doctrine, He commissioned them to preach to the world.

d. They understand Him literally, and He corrects them not.

iv. Nicodemus misunderstood the question of Baptism:

a. Our Lord at once removes the difficulty: Jn. iii. 4, 5.

b. But He leaves the Apostles their interpretation as to this mystery.

v. We therefore take the Real Presence to be the teaching of Our Lord Himself.

Seen in the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament:

i. The promise made at Capharnaum, realized later in Jerusalem.

ii. Four inspired writers record its fulfilment: viz.
Mth. xxvi. 26—28. Lke. xxii. 19, 20.
Mrk. xiv. 22—24. 1 Cor. xi. 23—25.

iii. Their words clear, as to essentials to be accepted literally.
a. They are unanimous in declaring the Institution.
b. They say the Holy Eucharist contains the Body and Blood of Christ, as they were on the Cross.
c. On the Cross they were real; real therefore on the Altar.

iv. Why should God depart from the usual literal sense in this great Sacrament, using it in the ordinances of the Old and New Law?

v. Our Lord spoke to the Apostles only, at the last supper.
a. To them He declared His doctrines clearly: Mrk. iv. 11.
b. This Sacrament was His last will and testament.
c. Men speak seriously in such circumstances.

Seen from Tradition:

i. The Apostles understood our Lord's doctrine.
Their writings show it: *e.g.* 1 Cor. x. 16; xi. 27.

ii. The Liturgies they drew up for their churches show perfect accordance as to this doctrine.

iii. Prescription is in its favour, it having never been really denied till the 16th c., and held ever since.

iv. The Fathers of the Church
a. Contrast the types of the Old Law with this reality of the New.
b. Explain this spiritual food to be no cannibal banquet.
c. Enlarge on the great miracle of Consecration.
d. Often assume the doctrine, where not expressly stated.

Lessons: Prove your faith in the Real Presence, by
i. Humble genuflexion, and devout attitude before It.
ii. The spirit of reparation and thanksgiving.
iii. Adorning the Church and Altar, where It resides.
iv. Approaching worthily the holy Table.

197. EXCUSES AGAINST COMMUNION.

"They began to make excuse." Lke. xiv. 18.

i. The guests of the parable excused themselves from their invitation.

ii. How often do men imitate them in regard to the banquet of Holy Communion!

iii. Consider some of their excuses, and see how false they are.

I. Fear of bad Communion:

i. Fear is certainly good and wholesome: it is even necessary to us.

This very fear, if genuine, will secure you against such evil. But,

ii. Love is better, and more pleasing to the Friend inviting us.

iii. He humbles Himself under the form of bread, to draw and attract.

As once under the form of a Babe, in Bethlehem.

iv. Fear rather to stay away and refuse His gift. For,

v. Such refusal is threatened with eternal death: Jn. vi. 54.

vi. Fear of such sort is not humble, and is not according to God.

II. Fear of Familiarity:

i. Truly, familiarity is apt to breed contempt. But,

ii. To know God well is to love Him more.

iii. What blasphemy to think, that

a. Approaching God will make you wicked; or,

b. Absence from God will advance you in holiness!

iv. Would God's Church command what is wrong?

a. The early Christians communicated almost daily.

b. The Council of Trent and the Saints recommend it still.

v. Do you miss Mass, or daily Prayers, through fear of familiarity?

Faith, Love, Humility have here their fullest scope.

III. No devotion in Communion!

i. To have devotion and to feel it, are not the same.

a. Genuine devotion is often not felt.
b. Sensible devotion is not necessary, and is often delusive.
c. Otherwise how many would communicate at Easter?

ii. True devotion lies in humility, confidence and love.
iii. Sensible sweetness sometimes follows Communion, as an effect.
iv. The more you eat of this Bread worthily, the greater will be your desire of it.*

IV. Utter unworthiness:

i. God knows this, yet He bids us receive Him!
a. Will you wait till you sin no more?
b. To feel unworthiness is a good preparation.
ii. No mortal being has ever been worthy of Communion.
iii. Our Lord ate with sinners:
a. He came on earth for the sick, not for the healthy.
b. Medicine is for the ailing, not for the strong.
iv. The more imperfections we have, the greater our need of Communion.
v. Sincere sorrow and confession will remove guilty unworthiness.
vi. Each good Communion will help to diminish your unworthiness.

Lessons:

i. See the wiles of Satan!
a. He made Adam eat the fruit of death, in hope of life.
b. He deters men from this bread of life, through fear of death.
ii. But these excuses are vain and often insincere. For,
iii. The real cause for staying from Communion is usually attachment to some sin or failing.
iv. Guard against this evil, and Communion will be profitable to you.

* Corporal pleasures, when not obtained, create a desire to have them, but once possessed produce satiety. Spiritual delights, before they are known, are not desired, but when enjoyed, make the soul long for more.—*S. Gregory.*

198. THE HOLY MASS.

i. From the beginning, Sacrifice ever the essence of Religion.
   Act testifying to the supreme dominion of God.
ii. The Sacrifice of the New Law is the Holy Mass.
   A continuation and renewal of the Sacrifice of Calvary.
iii. During this octave, consider the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice.

Holy Mass:

i. A true sacrifice: because
   a. There is a *victim:*
      1. The invisible Body and Blood of Christ.
      2. Under the visible forms of Bread and Wine.
   b. There is a lawful *minister.*
      1. Jesus Christ, the invisible High Priest.
      2. Visible priest ordained to this end; for
         The outward act requires a visible minister.
   c. It is offered to *God alone.*
      1. Never to Saints or Angels.
      2. Though often in their honour.
   d. Acknowledging *God's dominion* over us.
      1. By the mystical destruction of the victim.
         Represented in the two-fold consecration.
      2. Hence two species are required for the Sacrifice.
         Though one alone suffices for the Sacrament.
ii. The clean oblation spoken of by Malachy i. 11.
iii. Applying to our souls the merits of Christ's death, for Mass is

The continuation of the Sacrifice of Calvary: because

i. The *Victim* is the same.

ii. The *Priest* is the same.

iii. *God*, to whom it is offered, is the same eternal Father.

iv. The *manner* of offering is alone different: *e.g.*

a. On the Cross, Our Lord was a bleeding victim.
On the altar, offered in an unbloody and mystical form.

b. On the Cross, Christ offered Himself in person.
On the altar, through the ministry of another.

c. On the Cross, He offered Himself once only.
On the altar, daily, till the end of time.

v. The *Ends* of the Mass are also the same, viz.:

a. *Adoration* of the Divine Majesty.

b. *Thanksgiving* for mercies of the past.

c. *Satisfaction* and atonement for sin.

d. *Petitions* for blessings, spiritual and temporal.
The four duties man owes to God.

Lessons:

i. Mass being the highest form of worship, the Faithful are required to assist at it on Sundays and Holy-days.

ii. Never omit so grave a duty, except through necessity.

iii. Hear it also, as an act of devotion, on other occasions.
S. Isidore.*

iv. Ever hear it with

a. Lively *Faith.*

b. Fervour of *Devotion.*

c. Special *Intention.*

v. Love and beautify the House of God, where such sacrifice is offered.

* S. Isidore contrived to get to Mass every day, though he had much to endure to do so from his employer, a Spanish farmer. A graceful legend says that one morning, while he was at Mass, his master found two oxen, guided by an angel drawing the plough through the fields. Henceforth his employer encouraged Isidore to go to Mass, thanking God for giving him one who brought Heaven's blessing on the farm.—*His Life*, May 10.

199. THE HUMAN SOUL.

"Doth he not go after that which was lost?" Lke. xv. 4.

i. The lost sheep of the parable is a figure of the soul lost in sin.
ii. Our Lord came to redeem our souls, at a great cost to Himself.
iii. They must then be of great value and worthy of consideration.
iv. Consider therefore to-day the

Nature of the Soul:

i. The superior part of man.
ii. United during life to a body.
iii. Though separated in death, destined for eternal reunion later on.
iv. Made to the likeness of God: *e.g.*
  a. God is a spirit: so too is the soul.
  b. God is the life of the universe: as the soul is of the body.
  c. God sees and knows all: the soul sees and hears all around it.
  d. God is everywhere: the soul is present in the whole body.
  e. God is one in three: the one soul has three faculties.
  f. God is eternal: the soul is immortal.
v. Nothing in Creation equals the beauty of a soul in grace.
  S. Catherine's vision.*

Dignity of the Soul: seen

i. In this real likeness to its Creator.
ii. In the cost of its Redemption after the Fall.
  a. God did not give the earth, or the stars for its purchase. But,
  b. He sent His only Son to die for it. Truly then,
    "You are bought with a great price." 1 Cor. vi. 20.
iii. It is the temple of the living God! 1 Cor. iii. 16.
iv. Its future destiny: to dwell with God eternally.
  a. It is an honour to live in the courts of kings.
  b. What dignity, then, to serve before the throne of God!

Value of the Soul:

i. Its immortality, as shown by
   a. The general law of Nature, that nothing is annihilated.
   b. Man's innate desire of continued existence.
   c. The universal belief of mankind, even among Pagans.
   d. The impunity of sin here requiring future retribution.
   e. Texts of Holy Scripture: *e.g.*

"These shall go into *everlasting* punishment." Mth. xxv. 46.

ii. We have but one soul:
If this be lost, it is lost for ever, and all is lost.†

iii. The Devil's jealousy and hatred of it show its value.

Hence: save your soul, no matter what the cost.‡

i. Ask the aid of God in so important a task, like S. Philip Neri.
ii. Be humble, imitating Our Lord's Sacred Heart: Mth. xi. 29.
iii. Keep a custody over the senses, against occasions of sin.
iv. Practise some degree of mortification.
v. Devotion to Our Lady, a pledge of salvation.
vi. All this explains the zeal of Saints for the salvation of Souls.

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* S. Catherine of Siena was permitted once to see the state of a soul in grace, and declared that nothing she could think of on this earth was in any way comparable to its beauty, so dazzling and overpowering, that she could not have lived under it, except that God specially supported her.—*Her Life:* Apl. 30.

† God has given us two eyes, two ears, etc. so that if one be lost or injured we can live and act with the other. We have however only one soul, and if that be lost, how can we live with God in eternity? —*S. John Chrys.*

‡ The Emperor Otto went to visit a hermit of renowned sanctity. Requested by the Emperor to ask for anything he wished, he replied: "All I ask you is that you save your soul: Emperor as you are, you must die like other men; therefore take care of your soul, save your soul." Otto withdrew, and ever afterwards remembered this advice to the end of his days.—*Lives of the SS.*

200. THE SACRED HEART.

i. To-day we honour the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
This honour, the devotion of these latter times.
ii. Consider the foundation of it, viz. the Incarnation.
For, dogma is the true basis of all devotion.

The Incarnation:

i. The Son of God taking to Himself the nature of man.
a. A real human body and soul. But,
b. Without sin or concupiscence.
ii. Not, conversion of the flesh into the Godhead.
iii. Not, the fusion of the two natures into a third one.
iv. But, the assumption of our humanity by the Person of the Son of God.
a. The human and divine natures are thus united, yet remain distinct.
b. As gold and iron melted together remain two distinct metals.
v. Hence, the face and Heart of Jesus were the face and Heart of God.
vi. Once united, the two natures will never more be separated; hence,
a. Our Lord's Body in the tomb was worthy of adoration.
b. His physical Heart, in like manner.
Not as mere flesh, but as hypostatically united to the Divinity.

The Heart singled out for devotion:

i. The heart is usually taken as the symbol of the affections:
We speak of men as hard-hearted, etc.
So the Heart of Christ symbolizes His exceeding love for man.
ii. He showed His Heart to Mgt. Mary Alacoque, 17th c.
Commanding her to obtain for It love and honour from men.
iii. Devotion to the Sacred Heart implies
a. Gratitude for the love of Jesus for us.
b. Veneration for this Model of all the Virtues.

c. Our efforts to transform ourselves into Its likeness.

Means of conformity with the Sacred Heart:

i. *Fidelity to Baptismal Grace:*

a. Hence should parents watch over their children.

1. To train them in the knowledge and love of God.
2. To accustom them to obedience, etc.
3. To guard them against all danger of sin.
4. To give them good example in everything.

b. Many, perhaps most, Saints have had holy mothers.

Early care preserved them their innocence.

c. Souls innocent of evil have a special affinity to the Sacred Heart.

In them is a perpetual growth in the spiritual life.

ii. *Frequent Confession:*

a. Why does the world hate the Confessional?

Because it fears to lay open the heart with all its stains.

b. But the innocent fear it not, though conscious of many frailties.

c. Sinners break the Law, then defer their Confession.

d. But those who strive to observe it love this Sacrament of mercy.

Some of the Saints received it even every day!

e. Thus are we enabled to resemble somewhat the Sacred Heart.

iii. *Prayer:*

a. Man rises to spiritual things by

1. His Intellect: to know God and His perfections.
2. His Heart: to love God and His goodness.
3. His Will: to obey God and His Law.

b. Prayer and Meditation effect within us some likeness to the Sacred Heart.

These, in brief outline, are some ways of

i. Advancing in the love of Jesus.

ii. Doing honour to His most Sacred Heart.

201. INSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH.

"Thou art Peter . . . the gates of hell shall not prevail."
Mth. xvi. 18.

i. Words addressed to S. Peter in reward of his profession of faith: Mth. xvi. 16.
ii. They show us Our Lord's institution of the Church.
iii. Consider them on this feast-day of the Apostle.

Thou art Peter:

i. Peter (Greek) means a rock.
ii. God, in changing a name, denotes future office: *e.g.*
Abram (great father) to Abraham (father of multitudes): Gen. xvii. 5.
Bar Jona (son of John) to Cephas, or Peter (rock): Jn. i. 42.
iii. Hence the successors of S. Peter change their name on their election: *e.g.* Sarto to Pius X.

The Gates of Hell:

i. Formerly, gates of Oriental cities were important places.
ii. There, were held assemblies, markets, courts, etc.
iii. Often they were strongly fortified.
Hence symbolical of power and importance.
iv. The gates of hell thus mean
a. The evil spirits, and their mighty influences.
b. The passions of men, scandals, persecutions, etc.
Words of a revolutionary.*

Shall not prevail:

i. Shall never overcome or destroy the Church.
ii. Nor frustrate her in her mission—the salvation of souls.
iii. On the contrary, the Church shall prevail
a. Against error: Arianism, Protestantism, etc.
b. Against persecutors: Nero, Diocletian, Bismarck.
iv. Words of encouragement to us amid the Church's trials; for

a. Christ assists the Church to the end: Mth. xxviii. 20.
b. The Holy Ghost guides and sustains her supreme Head.

Keys of the Kingdom: denoting

i. Power and authority: "the keys of office."
a. Who holds the keys is master of the place.
b. Custom in war, to hand the keys of the town to the conqueror.
Calais to Edward III. in 1347.
ii. Power to dispense the treasures of the Kingdom: *e.g.*
a. Grace, through the sacraments.
b. Indulgences, or remission of temporal punishment.
iii. Power of Orders (priesthood) and Jurisdiction (authority).
Hence S. Peter represented as holding two keys.
iv. The three-fold office of the Church, viz.:
a. Teaching office:
1. To preach the divine doctrine.
2. To condemn the false, and decide controversies.
b. Priestly office:
1. To offer the Holy Sacrifice.
2. To administer the Sacraments.
3. To bless and consecrate.
c. Pastoral office:
1. To rule the Faithful.
2. To legislate and punish.

Heaven:

i. Referring to things strictly spiritual.
ii. To things temporal, indirectly only, and as affecting spirituals.
iii. Worldly goods, etc. not included in the promise: on the contrary: Mth. v. 11.

Pray God to bless and prosper His Church, and make it spread through the world.

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* A leader in the French Revolution, seeing the churches pillaged and the priests slaughtered or exiled, cried out: "All's going well: if the Church survives this, I'll become a Catholic myself." The Church did survive, as we all know, but he didn't live to see it, for he fell a victim to other revolutionaries.—*Mérault.*

202. INFALLIBILITY OF THE POPE.

i. A doctrine, prominent in these days, connected with the Feast of S. Peter.
ii. Always and ever part of the deposit of Faith.
iii. Great misconceptions prevail on the subject: hence the importance of it.

Infallibility of the Pope:

i. Does not mean
  a. *Inerrancy*, or inability to *believe* what is wrong.
  b. *Impeccability*, or inability to *do* what is wrong.
    The Pope is mortal, like ourselves.
ii. Does mean
  c. Inability to err in Faith and Morals, as supreme teacher of the Faithful.

Conditions for Infallibility:

i. As "Pastor and Doctor of all Christians."
  a. The Pope must speak, as Head of the Universal Church.
  b. Not
    1. As a private person: *e.g.* speaking to one or several.
    2. As an individual Bishop: *e.g.* preaching in a Church.
    3. As a private theologian: *e.g.* writing a treatise. But,
  c. In his official capacity: *ex cathedra.*
ii. Defining some doctrine
  a. Of *Faith*, revelation from God to be believed by all; or,
  b. Of *Morals*, law of God to be obeyed by all; but,
  c. Not of science, etc. except as affecting Faith or Morals: *e.g.*
    The evolution of the soul (against Faith).

Proofs of Infallibility:

I. SCRIPTURE:
  i. God gave especial assistance to the High Priest of old: Deut. xvii. 8—13.
    a. Who was but a type of the Pontiff of the New Law.

b. Hence must the latter receive the same.
Otherwise the reality would be inferior to the type.

ii. Christ declares Peter the rock whereon He builds His Church: Mth. xvi. 18.
a. Now the stability of a house depends on its foundation: Mth. vii. 25.
b. If the Church is infallible because on the rock, the rock must be infallible.

iii. Christ prayed that Peter's Faith might not fail.
Now the prayer of Christ is efficacious and heard of the Father: Jn. xi. 22.

iv. Christ commissioned Peter to feed both lambs and sheep: Jn. xxi. 15—17.
a. Now the chief food of souls is truth through faith.
b. Hence Peter must give wholesome food, *i.e.* must not err.

II. TRADITION:
Testimony of the Fathers showing the belief of the Church in their day: *e.g.*
Origen, 3rd c.: S. Jerome, S. Augustine, 5th c.
Roma locuta est: causa finita est. S. Aug.

III. REASON:
i. Knowing God's love and justice, we cannot suppose a Head given to the Church that could lead it into error.
ii. Requires in the Church one who, under God's guidance, should with certainty explain His word and correct all error.
iii. Christ Our Lord
a. Promised the Church should not err: Mth.xvi.18.
b. Instituted the Church, united to its Head.
Therefore the Head must be infallible.

IV. DEFINITION, as a dogma of Faith, by the Vatican Council, 1870, sufficient for all good Catholics.

Lessons:

i. Devotion and confidence in S. Peter.
Solid and widespread in England, till the 16th c.
ii. Reverence, love and obedience to his Successor.
iii. Prayer, and readiness to assist him.

203. THE POPE.

i. Our Lord chose Peter's boat to preach from, because
  a. Peter was to become the prince of the Apostles;
  b. Peter's boat was to be a figure of the Church:
    Wherein alone Christ still teaches the multitudes.
ii. Consider the position of the Successor of S. Peter.

Visible Head of the Church:

i. The Church must have a Head that can be appealed to:
  a. As a centre of unity in Faith, Morals and Discipline.
  b. Necessary to every society, so as to secure law and order.
    A kingdom must have a king.
    An army, a general.
    So the Church, the most perfect society, must have a head.
ii. This Head is the Bishop of Rome:
  a. Who has a diocese, like any other Bishop.
  b. Rome, in Italy:
    1. Where S. Peter reigned 25 years.
    2. The capital of Christendom, the "eternal city."
  c. Though sometimes living elsewhere, still remaining Bishop of Rome.
    The Popes at Avignon: A.D. 1309—1377.
iii. Called the Pope, which word signifies Father.

The Pope, as successor of S. Peter is:

i. The Spiritual *Father* of all Christians.
  a. The source of all authority and power in the Church.
  b. From whom Bishops and Priests receive theirs.
  c. Through them the Faithful have Sacraments and Sacrifice.
  d. Thus is the Pope their Spiritual Father, as source of the spiritual life of their souls.

ii. Their *Shepherd:*
  a. To rule them under God.
  b. To make laws for their guidance.
  c. To lead them to good pasture-lands.
  d. To guard them against sin and evil.
  e. To inflict salutary punishment, when necessary.
iii. Their *Teacher:*
  a. Preaching the divine doctrines.
  b. Condemning heresy and error.
  c. Deciding religious controversies.
  d. Infallible, when defining doctrines.
    1. As to Faith, or Morals.
    2. To be held by the Universal Church.
    3. In his official capacity: *ex cathedra.*
iv. Called the Vicar of Christ: *i.e.*
  a. One who acts in the name and place of Christ.
  b. Every Bishop usually has a Vicar in his diocese: *e.g.* . . .
  c. Honour and obedience due to him, as to the Bishop.
    Still more to the Pope, as representing Christ.
v. Elected by the College of Cardinals, in Conclave assembled.
  But receiving his powers from God, as Peter's successor.
vi. May resign his high office:
  S. Peter Celestine resigned, in 13th c.: May 19.
  Pius VII. prepared to do so, 1804.

Lessons:

i. Ever show to the Pope, as spiritual
  a. Father: love of the *Heart*, and temporal aid, if necessary.
  b. Shepherd: obedience of the *Will* and every confidence.
  c. Teacher: submission of the *Intellect* to his words.
ii. Pray God for light and protection upon him.

204. THE UNCERTAINTY OF EARTHLY THINGS.

i. To-day's Gospel gives an example of confidence in Jesus justified and rewarded: Lke. v. 5.
ii. Similar confidence will be our support amid the vicissitudes of life.
The Providence of God watches and rules the greatest and the least.
iii. To prompt us to trust in God, let us consider
a. The uncertainties of life, and our helplessness in their midst.
b. What thoughts are suggested by them.

The Uncertainties of life:

i. Unnecessary to suggest that all things are subject to change.
It would be like proving the existence of the sun.
ii. Equally so, that these changes cannot be foreseen.
Yet how little effect these clear truths have on men.
iii. To judge by appearances, each seems to think himself an exception to the general law of change.
iv. Such fatal deception causes the loss of many souls, making them
a. Neglect all moral and religious duty.
b. Presume on the continuance of health and prosperity, to sin the more.

We need reminding that

i. Industry and wisdom can do but little, except by the pleasure of God.
As seen in the case of Peter's fishing.
ii. The most happy and successful may soon totter and sink in ruins. For,
iii. The seeds of change and decay are sown in us all.
iv. The present is passing away: the future will do the same.
v. The world is in perpetual motion, and nothing is stationary.

Like the stream ever flowing, or the wheel ever turning.

vi. We have endless examples of such truths: *e.g.*
Youth's beauty and dreams fade away and disappear.
The greatest changes are often the work of a moment: *e.g.*
The vessel wrecked in a storm.
The city overthrown by an earthquake.

vii. Amid such uncertainties,
a. Men labour and scheme, as though all depended on themselves.
It is right to be thoughtful and industrious for the future. But,
b. We must act in moderation, referring all to our future good.

Higher thoughts and views:

i. Let the mutability of earthly things
a. Be an antidote against pride, extravagance, etc.
b. Be an inducement to practise humility and modesty: Prov. xxvii. 1.
c. Wean your hearts from the goods of earth, to fix them on God.

ii. In the midst of *prosperity:*
a. Remember how easily poverty may overtake you.
b. Extend a helping hand to those in need; and,
c. Cherish sympathy for those in sorrow.

iii. In the day of *tribulation:*
a. Be not disheartened, for a change will surely come.
b. Take courage from the thought that God watches over you: 1 Cor. x. 13.
c. Know that suffering is favourable to merit and reward: 2 Cor. iv. 17.

iv. Defer not till to-morrow the duty of to-day:
a. The uncertainty of life is too great, to run such risk.
b. Restrain and correct your passions, lest death surprise you.
Procrastination is the thief of time: Ps. xciv. 8.

205. CHRISTIAN JUSTICE.

"Unless your justice exceed that of the Scribes." Mth. v. 20.

i. Great should be the virtue and goodness of the Christian: For,
   a. To-day's Gospel requires it.
   b. Our Lord's example should inspire it.
   c. Gratitude to God suggests it.
   d. His promised rewards encourage it.
ii. Unless we excel the Scribes, we shall not enter Heaven!
iii. What a threat is this!
   a. Coming from the Lord of all meekness and love.
   b. Not of temporal pains, but of eternal loss.
   c. Made directly to His disciples and friends; then,
   d. To all who are less perfect than the Pharisees.
iv. Yet the Pharisees were exact observers of the Law:
   a. They frequented the Temple to pray: Mth. vi. 5.
   b. They gave alms and tithes: Mth. xxiii. 23.
   c. They fasted often: Mth. vi. 16.
v. How many Christians do less: *e.g.* who
   a. Seldom come to church, even on Sundays.
   b. Are hard to the poor and needy.
   c. Easily seek dispensation, and do no penance.
vi. How terrible then the thought, that
   a. If the Pharisees who did such things, good in themselves, are yet condemned, what of us who do so little?
   b. If the fruitful tree be not spared, what of the dead one?
   c. If they are damned who do some good, what of us who do positive evil?
vii. Yet the Justice of the Pharisees was greatly wanting:
   a. It was external only: done to be seen of men: Mth. xxiii. 5.
      Parading their phylacteries: *Ibid.*
      Love of ceremonial: *Ibid.* xxiii. 7.
      Frequent purifications: *Ibid.* xv. 2.
   b. Accompanied with interior corruption.

Hence Our Lord compared them to whited sepulchres: *Ibid.* xxiii. 27.

c. Perverting the sense and letter of the Law: *Ibid.* xv. 6.

viii. Now does our Justice exceed theirs? *e.g.*

a. Are our acts done for God and in the state of grace? or,

b. Do we seek the notice and applause of men?

c. Is our will conformed to the Will of God?

d. Are we within, before God, as we appear without, before men?

e. Do we despise others, for not doing as *we* do or wish?

f. Are we hard to sinners, like the Pharisee against the Publican?

Though Our Lord was merciful to Magdalen and the Prodigal.

ix. Our Justice is but pharisaical, if

a. We avoid only external evil, and fulfil only public duty.

b. We follow worldly maxims rather than the Law of God: *e.g.*

In matters of amusements, etc.

As to indiscriminate reading; or,

Education divorced from religion.

c. We produce no good works, fruits of the Gospel teaching: or,

d. Do our works through vain and sinful motives. For,

x. To do our works without the interior spirit is not true virtue.

a. We may appear strict and good before men; but,

b. We draw down upon us God's reproach of old.

"Their heart is far from Me." Mth. xv. 8.

xi. To exceed the Justice of the Pharisees is a command binding all.

To this end, we must endeavour

a. To give interior life to acts, by purity of intention.

b. To think not of the past, but press on like S. Paul: Phil. iii. 12.

c. To have the will to be perfect.

d. To hunger and thirst after the justice of God.

206. RECONCILIATION.

"Go first to be reconciled to thy brother." Mth. v. 24.

i. These words express the important duty of reconciliation.

ii. Our Lord did not exaggerate: His words were ever the sober truth.

If then *He* considered this duty imperative, so must *we*.

iii. It is a practical question, of no small difficulty.

a. Hence strive to master the principle, and practise the lesson.

b. For this, see how God values Sacrifice, and yet prefers Charity.

Sacrifice:

i. Offering of a victim to God alone, in testimony of His dominion over us.

Expressing Adoration: Thanksgiving: Petition: Satisfaction.

ii. God insists on Sacrifice, as homage due from His Creatures; yet,

a. He will not accept it from one at variance with a brother.

b. He is willing to forego it, till reconciliation is effected.

iii. With the ill-disposed, God acts herein as with unworthy priests of old: Mal. i. 10.

a. Obedience is better than sacrifice: but reconciliation is an act of obedience.

b. Love of our neighbour is proof of our love of God, which cannot exist without it.

iv. Now we offer gifts to God (and should retire, if ill-feeling exists), whenever

a. We pray to Him.

b. We come to hear Mass.

c. We visit and, especially, receive the Holy Eucharist.

v. If then in preparing for Communion, you remember some ill-will, defer it!

Our Lord lays down this command to-day.

Reconciliation:

i. All this shows the necessity of Reconciliation.

ii. It is a law given to each one individually:

a. Hence proposed in the singular number:

"If *thou* bring thy gift . . ."

b. This practice has difficulties, yet we must obey. As Faith has difficulties, yet we must believe.

iii. Our duty herein is two-fold, viz.:

a. Negative:

We must exclude no one: the law of love is universal.

b. Positive:

1. This law binds, as soon as cause of offence has arisen.
2. We must manifest our willingness to be reconciled.
   - *α.* Giving and returning the ordinary signs of good-will.
   - *β.* Making the first advances, if we are the offenders.
   - *γ.* Even if not, trying to remedy the evil.

iv. Easy perhaps in theory, but often difficult in practice: granted! But,

a. The difficulty lies in our pride or worldliness.

b. Each one thinks it the other's place to take the first step. But,

1. Our Lord to-day makes no such distinction.
2. God does not so act, in pardoning us.

v. Take high views in regard to your neighbour's soul. Who is right—God who loves it, or you that disdain it?

vi. Further thoughts:

a. Don't add to life's troubles by dissensions.

b. Study and practise to-day's lesson, in love to

1. *God*, your common Creator and Judge.
2. Your *neighbour*, whom He loves, and you must love in Him.

c. If you refuse love to your neighbour, you refuse it to God.

207. PROVIDENCE.

"Whence can any one feed them with bread?" Mrk. viii. 4.

i. Many forget that they are in the hands of a wise Providence.
Or, they think of It, only to mistrust It.
ii. Many also receive Its blessing, without thanking God.
iii. Hence two subjects for consideration, viz.:

I. **Confidence** in Providence:

i. Some circumstances in life most gloomy and discouraging: *e.g.*
A mother left a widow, with a young family.
A father and children, struck down by sickness.
The rich, reduced to poverty and want.
ii. In such cases we need no small confidence in God, for support in the trial.
iii. How consoling and cheering is this confidence amid distress.
a. Remembering God's promises to care for those who cry to Him.
"No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded." Ecclus. ii. 11.
"The Lord is good to them that hope in Him." Lam. iii. 25.
"They shall call on My name, and I will hear them." Zach. xiii. 9.
b. Knowing that all things happen by divine appointment for our good.
c. Resigning oneself to such appointment.
All a source of peace and contentment, even in trial.
iv. We must not expect God to work miracles, as for
The Israelites in the desert: Ex. xvi.
Elias, by the ravens: 3 Kgs. xvii. 6.
S. Paul, the Hermit: Jan. 15.
v. He will take ordinary means, with equal effect: *e.g.*
a. Inspiring some one to bring relief.
b. Making circumstances change the situation; and
c. Imparting patience and resignation.

vi. If confidence be needed in greater cases, so also in lesser ones.
  a. Why such undue anxiety about the future?
  b. Why such trouble about evils that may never occur?

> "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?" Mth. viii. 26.

  c. Have you or yours ever yet wanted the necessaries of life?
  d. Why then doubt, like the disciples, saying:

> "Whence can any one feed them with bread?"

  e. God feeds the birds of the air, so will He you.
  f. He clothes the lilies of the field, so will He you.
vii. Have full confidence in God, yet also resignation to His Will.
  Fully convinced that whatever happens is from Him and for the best.
viii. Meanwhile *we* also must do our best:
  a. In vain shall we expect to reap, if we do not sow.
  b. God alone gives the increase, but He requires our labour to precede.
ix. Loving *Confidence in God*, a first lesson to learn.

II. **Gratitude** to Providence:
  i. Thankfulness for blessings received, a duty to God's Providence.
    a. How seldom do men thank Him for their crops, successes, etc.
    b. Only when misfortune comes, do they think of Him, then to murmur.
  ii. Ingratitude most hateful both to God and man.
    Our Lord's complaint about the lepers: Lke. xvii. 17.
    Our own painful experience.
  iii. This spirit ever a characteristic of the Saints.
    a. They have grieved, because men are unthankful.
    b. They even invited the brute creation to give thanks to God.
  iv. A means to obtain a continuance of favours.
  v. *Gratitude* to Providence, a second lesson to learn to-day.

208. GROUNDS FOR CONFIDENCE IN GOD

i. The Knowledge, Goodness and Power of God, three sources of Confidence.
ii. All three exemplified in the miracle of to-day's Gospel.

I. **Knowledge** of God:
  i. *Past:*
    a. Our Lord reminds His Apostles that
      1. The multitudes had been with Him three days.
      2. Many had come from afar to hear Him.
    b. God remembers all it has cost us to follow and serve Him.
      Temptations, sacrifices, obstacles.
    c. What a good Master to serve, who forgets not our past efforts!
  ii. *Present:*
    a. Our Lord knows the extreme want of His people; so,
    b. God knows all our sorrows and trials, spiritual and temporal.
    c. Men know them not, and won't even believe them.
      Why then trust to them rather than to God?
  iii. *Future:*
    a. Our Saviour warns the Apostles of the danger of dismissing the people.
    b. It is the future usually that troubles us most.
    c. Yet why trouble about that of which we know nothing?
    d. God alone foresees the future, and knows it in regard to us.
      Leave then to Him the care of it.

II. **Goodness** of God:
  i. *Compassionate:*
    a. Men often see our sorrows, but remain insensible to them.
    b. Not so Our Lord, who pitied the multitude.
    c. Will God then be insensible to *our* crosses?

ii. *Efficacious:*
- *a.* Our Lord would not dismiss the people, lest they should faint.
- *b.* Hear His words, O you that serve Him well!
- *c.* He may try you, but never beyond your strength.
- *d.* Men are often unable to help, not so God.
- *e.* Whence is this help to come?
  1. Such the question of the Apostles: Mrk. viii. 4.
  2. You may not know how or whence it can come.
  3. Yet it will come, if you have confidence, provided by the

III. **Power** of God:

i. *General order of Nature:*
- *a.* Creation of all things out of nothing.
- *b.* Plants, crops and flocks are yearly renewed.
- *c.* We ungratefully forget the Giver: Anxious beforehand, indifferent afterwards.

ii. *Divine Providence:*
- *a.* God specially provides for them that love Him.
- *b.* They never want, who are devoted to the sick and poor and good works.
  1. The more they give for God, the more they receive.
  2. An effect of God's Providence, governing all.

iii. *Order of Grace:*
- *a.* Multiplication of loaves a type of the Holy Eucharist.
  1. What profusion of food for our souls herein!
  2. Not only grace, but its very Author.
- *b.* If we are weak, it is our own fault: the food of the strong
  1. Is within our reach, if we desire it; but,
  2. Is often received without due fervour.

Conclusion:

i. Such are three powerful motives for confidence in God.
ii. Consider them well, to obtain such confidence.

209. GOOD WORKS.

"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit. . . ." Mth. vii. 19.

i. S. James tells us that faith without works is dead: Jas. ii. 26.
ii. In to-day's parable, *we* are the tree, and our *works* the fruit.
iii. Unless we do good works, we shall be cast aside.
iv. How necessary therefore to reflect on this subject.

Necessity of Good Works:

i. Many will be condemned for not realizing this need.
   a. Thinking it sufficient for salvation if they avoid evil. And,
   b. Forgetting that God's command is two-fold: viz.
   "Decline from evil and do good." Ps. xxxvi. 27.
ii. This two-fold command must be observed in both its parts.
   a. To fast or pray will not avail alone:
   You must also "decline from evil."
   b. To avoid sins of commission is not enough:
   You must also "do good."
iii. Hence, think not sermons on negligence, etc., do not apply to you, because you feel not guilty of grievous sin. For,
   Sin may come by omission, as well as by commission: *e.g.* . . .
iv. Comparisons by Our Lord, to show the need of good works:
   The husbandman must sow, if he wish to reap: Mth. xiii.
   We are to gain our wages by labour and work: Mth. xx. 2.
v. Salvation then depends on good works, and not on the mere absence of evil.
   A man is rewarded for the work he does, not for the injury he does not.
vi. Even in sinners, good works are not useless: *e.g.*
   The Ninevites were spared through them: Jon. iii. 10.
   The alms of Cornelius pleased God: Acts x. 4.
vii. The 16th c. Reformers held faith alone to be necessary.

Easy doctrine, but false and opposed to that of Christ.

viii. Good works therefore are necessary: *Jas. ii. 24: Trent, vi. x.*

The Practice of Good Works:

i. Good works, being thus necessary, must be within our reach. For,
   - *a.* Nothing is required of us, beyond what we can do.
   - *b.* A divine assurance most consoling: Deut. xxx. 11—14.

   Good works are included under three chief heads, viz.
   - *a. Prayer:*
     1. However busy your life, you may yet pray well.
     2. Daily and weekly devotions.
     3. Morning offering of your actions to God is prayer.
     4. Occasional ejaculations from the heart.
   - *b. Fasting:*
     1. However weak, you may yet fast: for,
     2. Fasting includes
        - *α.* Every sort of mortification and self-restraint.
        - *β.* Bearing in patience the trials and crosses of life.
   - *c. Almsdeeds:*
     1. Even though living on alms, you may give alms; for,
     2. It implies the spirit of Charity in general: The Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy.

iii. Thus they are within the reach of all: all therefore must do them.

iv. Motives for doing good works:
   - *a.* The *Necessity* of them (as above).
   - *b.* Their *Utility*, in gaining merit and reward.
   - *c.* The *Gladness* they bring to the heart.
   - *d.* The *Dignity* they confer, bringing us near to God.
   - *e.* The very *Facility* of doing them.

v. In conclusion, appreciate and practise good works.

210. THE WILL OF GOD.

"He that doth the will of My Father. . . . " Mth. vii. 21.

i. In the "Our Father," we daily beg that God's Will may be done.
ii. This Our Lord here declares to be the means of salvation.
iii. Do we sufficiently realize all this?
iv. Consider this simple, but efficacious, means of sanctification.

The Will of God:

i. We are bound by every title to do God's Will.
He is our Creator, Redeemer, Benefactor, Judge.
ii. God alone has the inherent right that His Will be law.
Others, only as holding His place. For,

"There is no power but from God." Rom. xiii. 1.

iii. Known by
a. The Ten Commandments:
The outward expression of the divine Will.
b. The Laws of the Church, in like manner. For,

"He that heareth you heareth Me." Lke. x. 16.

c. The voice of Superiors, unless opposed to God:
Parents, Ecclesiastical Rulers, Magistrates.
d. The common events in life: *e.g.*
1. Sickness.
2. Death of friends.
3. Failure, weather, etc.
4. Persecution, opposition, and disappointments.

iv. Always holy and just, and always best for us.
The poisonous flower.*

Must be done:

i. As the only means of reaching Heaven.

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments." Mth. xix. 17.

"He that doth the will of My Father . . . ." Mth. vii. 21.

ii. Without this, all else will little avail. For,

iii. Holiness and perfection do not consist

a. In leaving the world, except for a few.

b. In austerities, third orders, etc.

c. In prayer and sacraments only.

"Not every one that saith to Me Lord, Lord . . ." Mth. vii. 21.

d. In mere amount of grace, which is often abused.

iv. The essence of holiness consists in doing God's Will. Your daily round of labour, for God's sake.

v. All creation obeys that Will most perfectly: *e.g.*

The planets follow the orbits traced out for them.

The tides ebb and flow, according to law.

The bee builds its cells, according to its instinct.

The flowers grow, each according to its nature.

vi. Why does Man alone rebel and refuse to obey?

a. Because he is proud.

b. Practise humility, and obedience will be easy: Say

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 6:

"Not my will, but Thine be done." Lke. xxii. 42.

Lessons:

i. Seek ever to know and to do God's Will.

ii. It will procure your happiness, even here; and

iii. It will secure you easy entrance into Heaven.

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* An English lady in India plucked a flower in a friend's garden, and began to smell it, when a negro servant snatched it from her. She complained of the insult, but her host explained how it contained a most deadly poison, from which the slave wished to save her, though unable to say so. Thus do vexations turn to our good.—*Schmidt.*

211. THE STEWARDSHIP.

"Give an account of thy stewardship." Lke. xvi. 2.

i. The rich man's words to his steward, will one day be addressed to us, as the stewards of God.
i. Words of the highest import, and worthy of serious thought.
ii. Consider of what goods we are the stewards.

Time: (p. 226.)

i. One of God's most precious gifts! Yet how is it wasted!
ii. Its brevity: the present alone is really ours.
iii. Its value: wherewith we may purchase eternal happiness.
How appreciated in Hell . . . Purgatory . . . and Heaven!
iv. Examine and see
a. Whether you use your time well?
b. Whether you cannot use it to better advantage?
1. Daily occupation, mental or manual.
2. Leisure hours, in more serious work.
3. Making garments for the poor, vestments for churches, etc.
v. Repair the past by care in the future: by
a. Appreciation of the brevity and value of time.
b. Definite occupation, and punctuality.
c. Good intention in all you do.
vi. An account will be demanded, when time comes to an end.

Goods of the World:

i. As regards others, our lawful possessions are our own, absolutely. But
ii. As regards God, we are only the stewards of them.
iii. God rules the physical world by secondary causes: The seasons result from the earth's revolving round the sun.

iv. So also the moral world: *e.g.*
He provides for the poor, by the hands of the wealthy.
v. Examine again and see whether we be good stewards:
a. Are we wasteful in any way?
b. Do we hoard up, like the miser?
c. Are we deaf to the just claims of others?
vi. You can take nothing into eternity, as you brought nothing into time.
Hence, make friends of the mammon of iniquity.

Talents:

i. Mental or physical powers: *e.g.* . . .
ii. These also to be used, and not wasted or hidden away
Yet how often does this happen!
a. Talent for drawing, painting, music, etc.
b. Singing for Church refused, or given only for pay.
All should join in the Church services (congregational).
Give an account of thy stewardship:
a. In death, we shall regret the little use made of our talents.
b. It will be too late then to merit, when no man can work.

Graces:

i. Last, but not the least of God's gifts: *e.g.*
a. Gift of the true faith.
b. Church within reach (not as in Africa).
c. Sacrifice and Sacraments: Instructions.
ii. What responsibility in regard to these, and what an account we must one day give!

Lessons:

i. Remember your stewardship, and tremble before God.
S. Jerome and other Saints of heroic virtue were filled with fear at this thought: how much more should *we* be!
ii. Consider the past, and resolve to amend for the future.

212. ALMSDEEDS.

"Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity." Lke. xvi. 9.

i. Mammon of iniquity, from the Syriac, means riches and wealth.

ii. Our Lord here urges those who possess them, to make good use of them.

That, from a danger to the soul, they may become a scurce of merit.

iii. One most effectual means to this end is the practice of

Almsgiving:

i. Giving to a neighbour in need, for God's sake.

ii. The standard by which we shall be judged: Mth. xxv. 35.

iii. Its necessity is founded on three great principles: viz. that

a. We are all brethren.

b. We are but stewards to God of the goods we possess.

c. We must detach our hearts from too great love of them.

iv. May be carried out in many ways: *e.g.*

a. Giving food and clothing to the needy.

b. Bestowing money to this end.

c. Through the works of mercy, corporal and spiritual.

d. By any kindness to others, in time of want.

v. Recommended to us:

a. By the voice of nature itself:

1. Our own heart tells us to do as we would be done by.

2. If we were in distress, we should wish for relief.

b. By the voice of God:

"I command thee to open thy hand to thy needy and poor brother." Deut. xv. ii.

"Give alms out of thy substance." Tob. iv. 7.

"Sell what you possess, and give alms." Lke. xii. 33.

c. By the example of Christ, "the Father of the poor."
Who became poor, to enrich us: 2 Cor. viii. 9.
Who fed the multitudes in the desert: Mrk. viii. 7.
Who came to preach to the poor: Lke. iv. 18.
d. By the writings and examples of the Saints: *e.g.*
S. Philip Neri: May 26.*
S. Vincent of Paul: Jly. 19.
e. By the need we have of mercy from God: Jas. ii. 13.

Effects of almsdeeds, done for God:

i. It renders God favourable to us.
ii. It helps to atone for sin.
iii. It transforms fleeting goods into eternal treasures.
iv. It gives power to prayer and intercession.
v. It never impoverishes, but
vi. It often brings even temporal blessings.
vii. It is a source of joy and gladness to the heart.
viii. It calms the desire of possessing, and is thus a social benefit.

Truly, indeed, an eminent good work!

Lessons:

i. Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity: By the various practices of almsdeeds and charity.
ii. To give well and meritoriously,
a. Avoid ostentation: Mth. vi. 2.
b. Keep your alms hidden from men.
c. Do it for God only.
iii. Show gratitude to God for His gifts, by bestowing gifts upon others.

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* Almsdeeds and charity were the characteristic virtues of S. Philip, and one day brought him a signal favour. An angel, under the form of a beggar, presented himself and held out a suppliant hand. Without enquiries, the Saint gave him what little money he had. "Very good," said the recipient, "I only wished to test your charity," and he disappeared.—*His Life.*

213. THE BEAUTY OF GOD'S HOUSE.

"My house is the house of prayer." Lke. xix. 46.

i. David loved the place of God's worship, the Tabernacle: Ps. xxv. 8.
ii. Consider the care God has ever exacted in the worship paid to Him, by His creatures.

The Tabernacle:

i. Designed by God Himself, before the Jews entered the Promised Land: Ex. xxvi.
ii. Made in pieces, to easily carry about and set up, as required.
iii. Consisted of two great divisions, separated by a veil.
  a. The *Holy:*
    1. Containing the golden candlestick and altar of incense.
    2. Entered daily by the priests, morning and evening, for sacrifices.
  b. The *Holy of Holies:*
    1. Containing the Ark of the Covenant, etc.
    2. Entered by the High Priest alone, and once a year only.
iv. Quadrangular court around, opened to the heavens above: Ex. xxvii. 9.
  a. Formed by sixty pillars of wood, overlaid with silver.
  b. These supported rods of silver, whence veils fell to the ground.
  c. For the people, not admitted within the Tabernacle itself.
v. How exact and minute the requirements of God in His worship.
vi. A type of the Church Militant, and David sang of its beauty.

The Temple:

i. Built by Solomon, in Jerusalem, B.C. 1012.
ii. On the model of the Tabernacle, but larger.
  The two Courts, separated by the "Veil of the Temple." Mth. xxvii. 51.
iii. Immensity and perfection of the work: 3 Kgs. vi.

iv. Magnificence of the Dedication services: *Ibid.* viii.
v. Destroyed by Sesac of Egypt: 3 Kgs. xiv. 25.
vi. Another built by Zorobabel, and repaired by Herod.
a. Inferior to the first, in splendour and size: but,
b. Honoured later by the presence of the Messiah: Agg. ii. 8.
c. Finally destroyed by the Romans: Mrk. xiii. 2.
vii. Behold again the magnificence God required in His worship.
viii. To the Temple also the words of David fitly apply.

Churches in the New Law:

i. Tabernacle and Temple, only shadows of our churches.
ii. After the persecutions, built as beautiful as possible. For the sacramental presence of Our Lord.
a. Magnificent Cathedrals, and Priory Churches.
b. Wealth of gold and silver, for the service of the Altar.
iii. Built in faith, not for men's wants, but for God's glory.
iv. In all prudence, the Church yet encourages beauty and magnificence.
v. To these still more, each one should apply King David's words.

Why such details?

i. To show the importance God attached to everything affecting His worship.
ii. To remind you how the Church does likewise in His name.
iii. To urge you to contribute to the beauty and perfection of your church.
How touching to read of the offerings of Israel! Ex. xxxv. 21—29.
iv. Shall we refuse or murmur, when asked to subscribe!
a. From whom the gold and silver you possess?
b. From whom your health and strength to labour?
c. Who gave success to your efforts in business?
d. Surely, then, all should afford to give something.
v. Give cheerfully, generously, and from a high motive.
vi. Yet ever remember, the chief beauty of God's House lies in the attendance and devotion of the Faithful.

214. THE HOUSE OF GOD.

"My house is the house of prayer." Lke. xix. 46.

i. On two occasions did Our Lord show zeal for His Father's House.
   a. At the beginning of His ministry: Jn. ii. 14—17.
   b. The day after His entry into Jerusalem: Lke. xix. 45.
ii. This zeal, shown by His outward severity,
   a. Teaches how He values reverence in the Temple.
   b. Serves to warn us, as to our conduct in Church.

The House of Prayer:

i. From the beginning, God has ever required external homage from men.
   Cain and Abel offering sacrifice: Gen. iv.
ii. As men increased, He required public service from them.
iii. To this end, He commanded, in the Old Law,
   a. The *Tabernacle*, in the desert: Ex. xxv.
   b. The *Temple*, in Jerusalem: 3 Kgs. v.
iv. In the New Law, these were followed by *Churches*, as we know them.
v. Churches are thus houses consecrated to the service of God.
   a. Hence magnificence and splendour become them in every form.
   See the Cathedrals of Christendom.
   b. They deserve every respect from man. For,
vi. The House of God is a house of
   a. *Prayer* and worship of creatures to their Creator.
   b. *Reconciliation* of penitents, in the sacred Tribunal.
   c. *Instruction*, for such as hear the divine Word.
   d. *Sacrifice*, whereby we give glory to God.
vii. Hence should we visit the Church for these ends:
   a. Especially on Sunday—the Lord's Day.
   b. And at other times, according to our needs and devotion.

viii. In every case, we must show it internal and external respect.
Otherwise the House of God may become once again

A den of thieves:

i. Napoleon is said to have turned Churches into stables!
A sacrilege of the deepest dye.
ii. The House of God may be dishonoured in other ways too.
a. Positively: by
1. Wilful distractions at prayer.
2. Laughing or talking, or distracting others.
3. Wilfully coming late to service.
4. Bad confessions and communions.
5. Thefts and other sins committed there.
b. Negatively: by
1. Staying away from service—Sunday Mass.
2. Despising instruction, evening service, etc.
3. Neglecting the Sacraments, channels of grace.
iii. Too many Catholics in these ways make the Church a den of thieves.
They literally rob God of His glory therein.
iv. Such conduct partakes in a measure of the nature of a sacrilege:
Desecration of a place dedicated to God.
v. Many instances of God displaying His anger against this: *e.g.*
Baltassar, and the handwriting: Dan. v.
Heliodorus, struck to the ground: 2 Mach. iii. 25.
Antiochus, covered with disease: 2 Mach. ix. 5.
vi. Beware then of dishonouring God's House in any way.
Correct young children who do so.
vii. The Temple of old deserved reverence and respect.
How much more our Churches, with the Real Presence within.
viii. Enliven your faith: it will be your safe guide in this regard.

215. PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN.

i. Our Lord had seen in His Disciples a spirit of pride and rivalry.

ii. To correct this, He showed them a reflection of themselves in the Pharisee.

iii. For us, as for them, the parable is instructive, and contains a two-fold lesson: of

a. *Warning*, to the proud and conceited soul.

b. *Encouragement*, to the repentant sinner.

The Pharisee: first type chosen by Our Lord.

i. A sample of the puritanical devotee, so exact as to outward observances, while neglecting the spirit of the Law.

a. Conscious of exciting admiration, he takes a foremost position.

b. And stands, rather than kneels, as seeming less humbling.

ii. Standing he prays, but without any awe of God:

"I give Thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men."

a. He asks for nothing, (pardon, grace, or perseverance).

b. He calls the rest of men extortioners and adulterers.

iii. Then he sees a publican coming in to pray, and pours upon him insult and contempt: "this publican."

iv. Anxious to exalt himself, he publishes his own good works:

"I fast twice in the week."

"I give tithes of *all* that I possess."

v. Thus from first to last, he has no thought of

a. His dependency on God.

b. Gratitude due for past benefits.

c. Graces necessary for the future; but,

vi. His whole anxiety is to appear well before men. Hence he stands forth, proclaiming his virtues and good deeds.

vii. But Our Lord says he was not justified before God.

The Publican: second type:

i. The very name was hateful to Jewish ears, as of

a. Betrayers of their race and country.

b. Tools of Roman power, to oppress their nation.
c. Agents of unprincipled men in Rome;
1. The taxes were farmed out to the highest bidder.
2. The publicans were extortionate in collecting them,
Enforcing the law with rigour, in their own favour.
d. The Jews thought themselves exempt from foreign tribute.
Hence their hatred of those who collected it.

ii. This Publican, repenting his evil ways, now prayed for pardon.
a. In humility, he stood at a distance from the altar.
b. Head and eyes cast down, he struck his breast in sorrow:
"O God, be merciful to me a sinner."
c. He feels now
1. His nothingness before the God of Heaven.
2. His sinfulness in the Holy Place.
3. The weight of his past misdeeds; but,
4. Trust also in the divine mercy.

iii. Thus did he pray in most worthy dispositions; and,
iv. Our Lord declares he was justified and forgiven.

Saint and Sinner:

i. Thus do the Pharisee and Publican appear before men; but,
ii. God judges not by appearances:
a. He hears the words of the Pharisee and condemns:
A *warning* to such as pray with pride in the heart.
b. He hears the prayer of the Publican and approves:
An *encouragement* to repenting sinners.

Conclusion:

i. Humility is the first essential of fruitful prayer.
ii. God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble: 1 Pet. v. 5.
iii. Humble prayer pierces the very clouds of Heaven: Ecclus. xxxv. 21.
"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

216. PRIDE.

"He that exalteth himself shall be humbled." Lke. xviii. 14.

i. The Pharisee is *the* great example of pride.
ii. It will be useful and natural to consider this vice to-day.

Found in almost every child of Adam.

Pride:

i. An inordinate love and opinion of one's own excellence.
   a. Mere admission of our qualities is not pride, but truth.
   b. Humility refers to God the glory of them.
ii. A sin:
   a. The first committed in Heaven, and on Earth.
   b. The greatest, as aimed directly against God.
   c. The most dangerous, because so natural and subtle.
iii. Essentially a lie, and a theft from God.

"I will not give My glory to another." Is. xlii. 8.

iv. The very root of all sin, hence one of the capital sins.

"From pride all perdition took its beginning." Tob. iv. 14.
"Pride is the beginning of all sin." Ecclus. x. 15.

v. Committed in
   a. The *Mind: e.g.*
      1. Attributing one's good to one's self.
      2. Delusion, as to our own defects.
      3. Impatience at reproof by lawful authority.
      4. Despising others.

"I am not as the rest of men . . . as this publican."

   b. The *Heart: e.g.*
      1. Desire of praise and esteem.
      2. Too great anxiety as to results.

3. Seeking ever to have one's own way.
4. Obstinacy.

Pharao: Ex. v. 2.

c. Speech: e.g.

1. Talking and boasting of one's works, talents, etc.

"I fast . . . give tithes of all."

2. Concealing, or excusing one's faults.
3. Criticizing others, especially superiors.
4. Angry discussions, etc.

d. Action: e.g.

1. Doing our work, to be seen and praised of men.

The builders at Babel: Gen. xi. 4.

2. Choosing the foremost places.
3. Refusing advice or assistance.

vi. Source of:

a. Inordinate Ambition and Vanity.
b. Hypocrisy.
c. Touchiness (as in the Sensitive Plant).
d. Contempt and disdain.

Lessons:

i. Avoid pride, as

a. The sin of the devils.
b. Hateful before God and men.
c. Foolish in itself.
d. The source of so many evils.

ii. Remedies:

a. Meditate the example of Our Lord and His Saints.
b. Remember your own nothingness and sin.
c. Know how God resists the proud: 1 Pet. v. 5.
d. Study the excellence and beauty of Humility.

217. THE ASSUMPTION OF B.V.

"Mary hath chosen the best part." Lke. x. 42.

i. After Our Lord's death, Mary remained some years on earth.
   a. In seclusion, under the care of S. John.
   b. Giving the Apostles details of her Son's life and doctrine.
ii. Death at last came to her, as to Him.
iii. Then was she exalted above all, body and soul to Heaven.
   For on earth she had taken the best part, which led to life eternal.

The Assumption:

i. The last of Mary's earthly privileges.
ii. The Ark of the Covenant, a type of Mary:
   a. It was of incorruptible wood, figure of her incorruptible body.
   b. It contained some Manna, and the Brazen Serpent, types of Our Lord.
iii. The sanctity of her Son preserved her from the spiritual corruption of sin.
   To this corresponded preservation from bodily corruption.
iv. Required by her relations to the Son of God.
   a. She gave Him His bodily life on earth.
      He restored her hers after death.
   b. She received Him corporally into her home in Nazareth.
      He does the same to her in Heaven.
   c. As co-operatrix in the Incarnation, she benefited by it in body and soul together.
v. Analogies with the other mysteries of her life:
   a. God's works are a harmonious whole.
   b. Now, all was miraculous or exceptional in Mary:
      Her Conception, her Virginity in maternity, her Sorrows.
   c. So must death harmonize with the rest—in her Assumption.
      Thus completing the series of God's wonders in her.

vi. Similarity between Our Lord's life and hers: *e.g.*
  a. His obscurity, Presentation, Passion are reflected in her.
  b. So, His Ascension has its counterpart in her Assumption.
vii. Not defined by the Church, as a dogma of faith.
  a. Yet clearly her teaching, as witness this Festival.
  b. Such teaching it would be rash and sinful to deny.

Glory of the Assumption:

i. The three divine Persons crown her Queen of Heaven and Earth.
ii. The Angels, surprised at her beauty, exclaim:

> "Who is she that cometh forth . . . bright as the sun?" Cant. vi. 9.

iii. Ardour of her parents, rejoicing in such a daughter.
iv. Welcome from S. Joseph, her earthly Spouse.
v. Joy and homage of all in Heaven.
vi. Placed on a throne of glory and power near God, as
  a. Mediatrix between God and man.
  b. Comfort of the Afflicted.
  c. Refuge of Sinners.
  d. Help of Christians.
  e. Queen of Angels and Men.

What courage and comfort these titles should inspire!

Lessons:

i. Honour Mary in her Assumption, since God has so honoured her.
ii. To obtain her help, what must we do?

Quidquid minimum, dummodo sit constans. *S. Jn. Berchmans.*

iii. Devotion to her all through life: a pledge of salvation.
iv. Beg especially the grace of a holy death.

Death of S. Stanislaus Kostka: Nov. 13.*

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* This young Saint, of about eighteen summers, begged of Our Lady, on the feast of S. Lawrence, August 10th, that he might die on the feast of her Assumption: he was then apparently in excellent good health, yet his prayer was heard, and he died a saintly death a few days later, on that very feast, A.D. 1568.

218. TITLES OF MARY.

"One thing is necessary." Lke. x. 42.

i. To-day is Mary's triumph—her coronation as "Queen of Angels."
ii. Besides this title, she has many others in the Litany.
iii. Suitable occasion to consider some of these: *e.g.*

Mystical Rose: Ecclus. xxiv. 18.

i. The Rose is considered to be the queen of flowers.
  a. Most fragrant and beautiful.
  b. Yet it has thorns beneath (that serve to protect it).
ii. Mary, Queen of Angels, fittingly represented hereby.
  a. Her *Soul* exhaled the fragrance of all virtue.
    1. Every virtue found a home in her heart.
    2. Her Immaculate Conception, the source of their perfection: for,
    3. Sin had never been there, to impede their growth.
  b. Beauty and perfection of her *Body* also:
    1. Our Lord the most beautiful of men.
    2. So His Mother shared His natural perfections.
    3. Ever fresh and fair, with a beauty leading men to God.
    4. Amid her very Dolours too, for sin had never tarnished it.
    5. Even in death, most beautiful to the eyes of the Apostles.

    What to-day, in the eyes of the Angels!
  c. No thorn in Mary, to prick, wound or offend.
    α. But her own heart was most deeply wounded in the Passion: Lam. i. 12.
    β. Her very name, in Hebrew, means bitterness.
    1. To protect and strengthen our virtue, *we* require a thorn or two.
    2. Mortification is a thorn, bitter yet most wholesome.
      α. Interior: of the Judgment and the Will.
      β. Exterior: of the Body, as to food, etc.
    3. Some degree of this, necessary to everyone.

iii. Invoke the "Mystical Rose" to obtain you this essential grace.

House of Gold:

i. Gold the most precious of all metals:
   a. The palace of Solomon all cedarwood and costly stone: 3 Kgs. vii.
   b. The Temple of Jerusalem lined with cedarwood and gold: *Ibid.* vi. 22.
   Both figures of this House of Gold in the New Law. For,
ii. Mary was the house Our Lord built for Himself.
   A house of gold surpassing the ancient types.
   a. Mary was "full of grace" and virtue.
   b. The gold of Charity, one of the chief perfections of this House.
iii. Charity is as gold among the virtues.
   a. Love of *God*, above all and in preference to all.
   b. Love of our *Neighbour*, in God and for God.
   As the Sun surpasses other luminaries, so does Charity the other virtues.
   c. To resemble this House of Gold, practise the golden virtue of Charity.

Queen of Angels:

i. Great rejoicings in Jerusalem, when David took thither the Ark: 1 Par. xv.
ii. Mary the true Ark of the New Testament.
   By her Purity, her Virtues and her Office.
iii. At length she came to die: died of love of God.
   a. Three days later, her tomb was opened.
   b. Her body was not there: but only fragrant flowers.
iv. The Church has ever taught her Assumption.
   a. In Heaven, she was received with acclamation.
   b. Crowned with glory, as "Queen of Angels."
v. If you desire a similar crown, walk now in her footsteps.
vi. Beg her to-day to secure you a share in her glory.
   This is truly "the one thing necessary."

219. DEAFNESS AND DUMBNESS, SPIRITUAL.

"They bring to Him one deaf and dumb." Mth. vii. 32.

i. The goodness and power of Christ so well known that men brought Him their sick to heal.
To-day we have the cure of one who was deaf and dumb.

ii. Under this type, consider those who are spiritually deaf and dumb.

Spiritual Deafness: towards

i. *Superiors* (parents, etc.), *i.e.* disobedience:
- *a.* Arising from pride, setting up its own will against authority.
- *b.* Its guilt will vary according to circumstances (person, command).
- *c.* The consequent punishment will vary in like manner.
  Adam and Eve expelled from Eden: Gen. iii. 24.
  Death of Absalom: 2 Kgs. xviii. 14.
- *d.* How common nowadays this spiritual deafness: *e.g.*
  Children refuse to hear their parents' voice.
  Servants murmur at the will of employers.
  The spirit of rebellion everywhere abroad.

ii. *Word of God:*
- *a.* Priests bound to explain the Faith to their flocks: *Trent, xxiv. iv.*
  "Wo is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel." 1 Cor. ix. 16.
- *b.* This implies the correlative duty on their part to hear it.
- *c.* Yet how many fail in the fulfilment thereof!
  1. Preferring ease and comfort at home, or elsewhere.
  2. Hearing an early Mass, without instruction.
  3. Or, if present, hear not, *i.e.* apply it not to themselves.
- *d.* No wonder their faith cools down and perhaps dies out.
  If you take the oil from the lamp, the light goes out.

e. Ignorance one cause of the great defection of the 16th c.*

iii. Spiritual deafness thus refuses to hear those who have a right to speak, admonish or command.

Spiritual Dumbness:

i. *Parents*, in regard to children's correction.

a. A duty too often omitted: result—a spoilt child!

"Dumb dogs, not able to bark." Is. lvi. 10.

b. In justice: without fear or favour, for the children's good.

c. In prudence: counsel first, without passion, in patience.

Omnia vide: multa dissimula: pauca corrige. S. Aug.

d. Omission of such duty, a source of evil to parent and child.

Punishment of Heli: 1 Kgs. iii. 13; iv. 18.

e. Responsibility of parents and others: Ezech. iii. 18.

ii. *Catholics* generally, as to

a. Neglect of daily devotions.

b. Omission of Sunday Mass.

c. Distractions at prayer.

d. Confession: allowing the dumb devil to seal their lips.

e. Silence: when they should inform superiors of some abuse.

iii. Thus does spiritual dumbness neglect the duty of speech.

Lessons:

i. See whether you suffer from spiritual deafness or dumbness.

ii. If so, go in confidence to Jesus, like the sick man of the Gospel.

Since repentance will obtain a certain cure.

* Some 25,000 of the Clergy fell victims to the Black Death in England, in the middle of the 14th c. This compelled the Bishops to ordain young and inexperienced clerics, many of whom were also illiterate, and thus unable to instruct the people in their religion. This led to a weakening of the Faith and was one of the causes of the great defection of the 16th c.—*Gasquet.*

220. HEALING THE DEAF AND DUMB.

Under the physical ailments of the man in the Gospel, consider our own spiritual frailties, typified by them.

Three-fold trial:

i. *Deafness:*
- *a.* Are we not deaf, spiritually, to
  1. What concerns the work of salvation?
  2. The Law of God and the maxims of the Gospel?
  3. Instructions in God's Word:
     - *α.* By continued absence from them? or,
     - *β.* By drawing no profit from them?
  4. The voice of conscience, and the inspirations of grace?
- *b.* On the contrary, are our ears not open to
  1. Uncharitable conversations?
  2. Attacks on morality or religion?
  3. Words of foolish flattery?

ii. *Dumbness:*
- *a.* What use do we make of the gift of speech?
- *b.* Are *we* not oftentimes dumb? *e.g.*
  1. Concealing sin in confession.
  2. Neglecting prayer to God.
  3. Taking no part in public services.
  4. Not defending Charity and virtue, when able.
  5. Omitting to correct those under our care.
- *c.* On the contrary, do we not sometimes speak amiss? *e.g.*
  1. Words of cursing, or blasphemy.
  2. Language of anger or abuse.
  3. Calumny, detraction or backbiting.

iii. *Weariness*, as a natural consequence:
- *a.* Weariness in well-doing may come from

1. Not advancing in virtue, rather than from actual faults.
2. Physical causes: health, weather.
3. The Devil.
4. Past sin, as a punishment.
5. Want of recollection.

b. Remedies:

1. Constant and even struggle.
2. Punctuality to duty.
3. Guarding against the worship of health.

Our Lord's action:

i. Imposition of hands.
Sufficient for the miracle; yet,

ii. He did more (Mrk. vii. 33, 34), in order

a. To instruct His Church: *e.g.*
Use of ceremonies in Liturgy and Ritual.

b. To instruct us also:

1. The spiritually deaf and dumb are difficult to heal.
2. They must retire apart, and consider their state.
3. They must open lips and ears to things of God.
4. They must groan in prayer, and seek their cure from God.

Proofs of the cure:

i. The complete change: for
The man heard and spoke aright.

ii. After receiving the Sacraments, what change is there in us?

a. Are we healed, or do we remain as before?

b. Do we still lend ear to forbidden discourse?

c. Do we still use the tongue for sinful ends?

iii. If so, their inefficacy in us would almost imply impossibility of cure.
A weighty thought indeed to dwell upon!

221. THE TWO-FOLD PRECEPT.

"Thou shalt love the Lord . . . and thy neighbour." Lke. x. 27.

i. True love of God is inseparable from love of our neighbour.

"There are two precepts, but only one Charity." *S. Aug.*

ii. The Gospel tells us this two-fold love is essential to salvation.

iii. It is therefore worthy of our serious attention.

First Precept: Love of God.

i. The very essence of Charity:
   Including Adoration, Homage, Reverence and Service.

ii. Grounded on God's
   a. Infinite perfections: love of Charity.
   b. Infinite goodness: love of Gratitude.
      1. *Length* of His love: its eternal duration.
      2. *Breadth:* universality of His favours.
      3. *Height:* sublimity of His graces.
      4. *Depth:* humiliations by which He gained them.
   c. Supreme dominion over us.
   d. Positive command: Deut. vi. 5.

iii. With our whole HEART:
   a. So that no love opposed to God shall enter.
      Abraham leaving his country for God: Gen. xii. 4.
   b. So that God be the highest and final object of our love.
      Abraham ready to sacrifice his son: Gen. xxii. 3.
   c. So that He be the chief object of our affections.
      Magdalen, at Our Lord's feet: Lke. vii. 47.

iv. With our whole SOUL:
   a. Memory, recalling God's benefits of every kind.
   b. Understanding, studying His works and mercies.
   c. Will, resolving to do all for His glory.

v. With our whole MIND:
   a. Often turning to God in our thoughts.
   b. Seeking to know God by study, instruction, etc.
vi. With our whole STRENGTH:
   a. With all fervour and devotion.
   b. Striving to serve God, according to His Law.
   c. Working only for God and His glory: *e.g.* Missionaries in heathen countries.

Second Precept: Love of our Neighbour.

i. All persons, without exception.
   In God and for God, otherwise it is mere philanthropy.
ii. Because:
   a. We are all children of God and brothers of Christ: Mth. xxiii. 9.
   b. In loving them, we love God: Mth. xxv. 40.
   c. It is a powerful means to obtain mercy: 1 Pet. iv. 8.
   d. God commands it: Mth. xxii. 39.
iii. Order in Charity must be observed: *e.g.*
   a. Our own soul before everyone and everything.
   b. Our neighbour's soul before our own body, in things of salvation.
   c. Children, parents and relations.
   d. Benefactors, friends and fellow-countrymen.
   e. Our enemies also: Mth. v. 44.
iv. This love of Charity will exist and be perfected in Heaven.

"Grace does not destroy Charity, but perfects it." *S. Thos. Aq.*

v. Without it, we cannot truly love God: 1 Jn. iv. 20.
vi. This love of others for God makes earth a foretaste of Heaven.
vii. This one law, if observed, would dispense with all human law.

222. PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

i. The parable of the Good Samaritan, one of the most touching of all.
ii. Full of varied instruction and lessons for each of us.

Points of the Parable:

A CERTAIN MAN:
- i. A Jew, hateful to the Samaritans:
  The greater therefore the merit of the Samaritan's conduct.
- ii. Adam and the human race, falling into sin.
- iii. Each individual member of the human family.

JERUSALEM:
- i. The "Vision of Peace."
- ii. The Garden of Eden and the state of innocence.
  Where Adam had peace with God, himself, Eve and all creation.
- iii. The state of grace and friendship with God.
- iv. Peace and joy which God wishes all men to have.

JERICHO:
- i. The "moon," and its ever varying phases;
  Representing the passing goods of this inconstant world.
- ii. The state of sin, to which too many gravitate.

THE ROBBERS:
- i. The devils, seeking to strip and wound our souls.
- ii. Their aids and agents—the world and the flesh.
  Often more successful than their own direct efforts.
- iii. We fall into their hands, when we yield to temptation.
- iv. Yet we can resist, for we have help at hand —God's grace.

  "There are more with us than with them." 4 Kgs. vi. 16.

- v. Despoiling us of divine grace, gifts of the Holy Ghost and merit.

THE WOUNDS, left in our soul, are:
- i. Darkness in the *Intellect*, so that we see not the truth.

ii. Weakness in the *Will*, whereby we easily yield.
iii. Corruption in the *Heart*, prone now to evil.

The Priest and Levite represent
i. The Old Law, which could not repair the Fall.
ii. The priesthood of Aaron, unable to save mankind.
iii. The hard-hearted, refusing efficacious means within their power.
iv. Hateful examples of unfeeling hearts.

The Samaritan:
i. Christ Our Lord, who came to redeem us.
a. The *oil:* His mercy and love, in the Sacred Tribunal.
b. The *wine:* His Precious Blood, in the Holy Eucharist.
c. The *beast:* His own Humanity, in which He suffered for us.
d. The *inn:* the Church He founded on earth, which
1. Receives sinners to her bosom, and
2. Offers aid and help to their souls.
ii. Priests of the Church, especially in the tribunal of Penance.
iii. Any person, doing works of mercy to others.

The Host:
i. Christ's Vicar, and the prelates of the Church. To these, on leaving the earth, He entrusted us all.
ii. Two pence:
a. Whatever is necessary to the welfare of our souls.
b. The two-fold power of Order and Jurisdiction.
iii. The return: in death and judgment, to repay.
iv. How worthy of our gratitude and love.

Resolution:

i. Be not as the rich man, refusing pity: 1 Jn. iii. 17.
But,
ii. Imitate the good Samaritan towards all, friends or foes.
For all men are neighbours.

223. PRAYER AND FAITH OF THE LEPERS.

"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Lke. xvii. 13.

i. Ten lepers met Jesus on His way to Bethany.
ii. They begged Him to heal them, which He did.
iii. Admire and imitate the qualities of their Prayer and Faith.

Prayer of the Lepers;

i. *Humble:*
  a. They stood afar off:
    1. As the Law required: Numb. v. 2.; and,
    2. Out of reverence for the presence of Jesus.
  b. Our life is full of sin, typified by leprosy.
  c. We must therefore recognize our unworthiness.
  d. Humility will lead us to confess our guilt.
ii. *Fervent:*
  a. On seeing Jesus, they cried out with a loud voice; because,
    1. Of their distance, and their longing desire to be cured.
    2. They feared to lose so good an opportunity.
  b. The further the soul is from God, the more should it appeal to Him.
    In prayer—short perhaps, but fervent and from the heart.
  c. If we feel our misfortune in being far from God and His Saints,
    1. We shall pray fervently to be delivered from sin.
    2. We shall seek to abandon all tepidity.
iii. *Common:*
  a. Common misfortune brought these men together.
  b. They prayed not for themselves individually, but all for each other.
  c. Such prayer (recommended by Our Lord: Mth xviii. 19) most effectual.
  d. Unite in *public* prayer, to obtain God's favours:
    1. Where private prayer fails, public prayer often succeeds.

2. To fail herein is to risk the loss of many graces.
3. Yet how many do fail, *e.g.* neglecting Church services.

e. Public prayer does violence to Heaven.

Faith of the Lepers:

i. *Humble and unmurmuring.*

a. They at once obey the word: "show yourselves."
b. Our Lord touched even lepers to heal them: Mth. viii. 3.
c. Hence this command seemed to them strange:
1. They knew the priests could not heal them.
2. They received no promise even of being healed.
d. Thus was their faith put to the test: while
e. Pride might have lost them their cure.
As Naaman nearly failed through it: 4 Kgs. v. 11.
f. We often wish to be dealt with according to *our* ideas: *e.g.* by Confessor, Superiors.
g. Through this want of humble Faith, we lose much grace.

ii. *Simple and unreasoning:*

a. Lepers, when cleansed, had to show themselves to the priests,
To be declared legally clean, and restored to civil life.
b. To be sent, not yet cleansed, surprised them, but they went.
Naaman was surprised at the prophet's command: v. 12.
c. Let us allow ourselves to be directed, and obey.
1. Such the homage God asks and values.
2. The Lepers reasoned not, but obeyed.

iii. *Rewarded* with perfect cure:

a. So with Naaman, when he obeyed: v. 14.
b. So with all, who
1. Renounce pride and false reasoning.
2. Obey God's voice in all simplicity.
3. Submit to the Church as to Him.

224. SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION.

"Go, show yourselves to the priests." Lke. xvii. 14.

i. Words addressed to the lepers, according to the precept of the Old Law.
ii. Applicable in the New Law to sinners, typified by the lepers.
iii. Sacramental Confession, the means for cleansing the leprosy of sin.

Sacramental Confession:

i. Accusing ourselves of our sins to a priest approved by the Bishop.
ii. Typified of old among the Jews:
  a. Men committing sins had to confess them: Numb. v. 7.
  b. Mercy promised to such as confess and repent: Prov. xxviii. 13.
  c. At the baptism of John, men confessed their sins: Mrk. i. 5.
iii. Confession of sins thus already existing, Our Lord did not explicitly command it.
  But in instituting Penance, He presupposed it.
iv. Implicitly ordained by Him, as a condition necessary for pardon:
  a. He gave the Church power to bind and loosen sin: Jn. xx. 23.
  b. The pastors of the Church thus constituted judges of souls.
  c. They must act in justice and discernment according to each case.
  d. This can only be, by the sinner declaring his guilt in Confession.
v. Thus the power of absolution is a judicial power.
  a. All power is given to the Son: Jn. v. 22.
  b. As the Father sent the Son, the Son sent the Apostles: Jn. xx. 21.
  c. Hence they share the judicial power of Christ.
vi. No sin so great that may not be remitted by it:
  "*Whatsoever* you shall bind . . . loose . . ." Mth. xviii. 18.

a. No distinction here of sin, great or small, public or private.
b. S. Paul absolved a sinner of a most grievous crime: 2 Cor. ii. 10.
c. Such was ever the teaching and practice of the Church.

vii. Not only pardons sin, but gives grace and remedies: Confessors are spiritual physicians of souls:
a. Pointing out dangers, and means to avoid them.
b. Discovering to us the delusions of Satan.
c. Instructing us in our duties and obligations.
d. Correcting mistakes of self-love.
e. Encouraging and comforting the faint-hearted.

Advantages:

i. Confession the best means for reformation of morals:
a. If men wish to lead a Christian life, they confess.
b. If, to follow passion, they cease confessing.
c. Hence the hatred of the world against it.

ii. It heals our pride, and is a support of virtue.

iii. Lost merit is restored, which gives courage to the penitent.

iv. Peace of mind is found in unburdening the soul.

v. It even influences bodily health, calming the nervous system.*

vi. It procures restitution of honour, goods and reputation.

vii. It remedies evils which no human law can reach: *e.g.*
a. Injuries are forgiven, and enemies reconciled.
b. Scandals are removed, and evil designs prevented.

viii. Thus is Confession, though sometimes painful, a benefit to all.
Satisfying a want of the human heart.

ix. Gratitude due to God, for His mercy and love herein.
Best shown by obeying His word: "Show yourselves to the priests."

* Dr. Badel, a Protestant physician of Geneva, declares Confession a cure for some diseases, owing to the great influence the moral state has on the physical state of man, and he recommends its practice as advantageous to Society. Leibnitz, Luther and Voltaire have also testified to its good effects.

225. THE STUDY OF NATURE.

"Behold the birds . . . consider the lilies." Mth. vi. 26, 28.

i. By the study of Nature, we may come to know God. From the Creation, rising to the Creator.
ii. To-day's Gospel, as a secondary lesson, invites us to such study.
iii. The works of man give us some knowledge of man:
iv. The works of God, of God: *e.g.*

Works of Man:

i. First example: a watch.
  a. Consider its parts: their minuteness, delicacy, regularity.
  b. Our thoughts then pass to the mind and hand that conceived and fashioned them.
  c. We clearly see design, hence a designer—the watchmaker.
ii. Second example: a musical work:
  a. Hear how organ and orchestra blend together.
  b. Then pass on to him, who outlined and completed the work.
  c. Thus you gain some idea of the mental powers of a Mozart, Wagner, etc.

Works of God:

i. First example: the Eye.
  a. For vision, a picture on the retina is necessary: hence, *e.g.*
  b. The eyes of fishes are rounder than those of land animals; for,
    The laws of refraction in air and water are different.
  c. Adaptation of the pupil to degrees of light and distance.
  d. Parts of the eye differ according to needs: *e.g.* The whale in water, the eel in sand and mud.
  e. All implies design, hence a designer—God.
  f. "Study of the eye, a cure for atheism!"
ii. Second example: the Earth.
  a. Stand on the beach and study the immensity of the ocean.

b. Carry the mind further, and see mountains and rivers beyond.
c. Consider the flowers, the animals and minerals.
d. Realize somewhat the gigantic proportions of this globe; then,
e. Form some idea of the power of Him who designed it—God.

iii. Third example: the Heavens.
a. The Sun is a million times larger than the earth. Yet,
b. The loss of the whole solar system would only be as a leaf lost in the forest.
c. Each of the stars is a colossal world, as fair as ours and greater.
d. Their awful distances cause them to seem to us so small.
1. The mind is overwhelmed with such figures.
2. How all earthly glory pales before such magnificent systems.
3. Well may we say: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" Ps. viii. 5.
e. Despite the telescope, we only see a narrow circle of the Heavens.
f. Then consider the movements of the heavenly bodies, their regularity, etc.
g. Where stop herein, except limited by the imperfection of our instruments?

iv. As then we know man from his works, so the Creator from Creation.
a. We gain some insight into His mysteries, His might and grandeur.
b. How petty and insignificant does man then appear! But,
c. New and brighter hopes dawn upon him, after such reflections.

Lessons:

i. Accept the invitation to study the works of Creation.
a. As a means to knowing and loving God better.*
b. As a source of information and pure pleasure.

ii. Adoration: Humility: Fear: Confidence: Gratitude.

* There is religion in everything around us, a calm and holy religion in the unbreathing things of Nature, which man would do well to imitate.—*Ruskin.*

226. OVER-SOLICITUDE.

"I say to you, be not solicitous." Mth. vi. 25.

i. A certain provident diligence is praiseworthy.
To procure the necessaries of life, subject ever to God's will.
ii. What Our Lord does condemn is too anxious solicitude.

Arguments against it:

i. From a minor to a major probability:
"Is not the life more than the meat . . .?" Mth. vi. 25.
a. If God give the greater, He will surely give the less.
b. Having given life, He will grant us its necessary support: For,
God is all wisdom and goodness and power.
ii. From the birds of the air:
"Behold . . . your heavenly Father feedeth them." Mth. vi. 26.
a. God feeds the irrational birds, who are not anxious about their living.
b. Therefore will He feed us also, reasonable beings, redeemed by the Precious Blood of His Son.
c. He does not compare us to oxen of the earth, but to the birds.
Like them, we must fly in spirit to Heaven to seek all we need.
d. The migrations of birds.*
iii. From the inutility of anxiety.
"Which of you . . . can add to his stature?" Mth. vi. 27.
a. Thought and solicitude cannot add to a man's height.
b. So anxiety is equally helpless to prolong his life.
c. God alone can increase our stature, or preserve life to its appointed end.
iv. From the flowers:
"Consider the lilies of the field." Mth. vi. 28.

a. As lilies grow, they are clothed in petals, as with raiment.
Their elegance, beauty and fragrance are very wonderful.
b. Solomon's robe was adorned with embroidered lilies.
Such garments, worn by princes, typify the robe of the elect.
c. Yet Christ prefers the lilies to all Solomon's glory.
d. If then God so clothe the grass, how much more us.
Over-anxiety herein is born of distrust of Providence.

v. From the practice of the Gentiles:
"After all these things do the heathens seek." Mth. vi. 32.
a. Too great anxiety about earthly things is the mark of a Pagan.
b. It is unbecoming in a Christian, who believes and experiences the daily Providence of God.

vi. From the omniscience of God:
"Your Father knoweth that you have need." Mth. vi. 32.
a. God truly knows all our needs and wants.
b. As a loving Father, He will provide for them.
c. Hence must we cast all our cares on Him.

Lessons:

i. These Our Lord's arguments, to excite our faith and confidence in God.
ii. Too great anxiety over temporal things is displeasing to Him.
iii. If we seek God above all, He will provide; for,
a. He *knows* our wants; He is omniscient.
b. He *wills* to relieve them; He is a loving father.
c. He is *able* to do so; He is also omnipotent.
iv. Hence in all things, have confident recourse to Him.

* Birds in their migrations have no provisions for the journey; they do not even know the way: it matters not: neither the number of miles, nor the perils of the sea, nor the darkness of night can terrify them. Confiding in Him who calls them, they expect to find the way, and along the way lodgings and provisions, and they are never disappointed.—*Gaume.*

227. THREE KINDS OF DEATH.

i. To-day's Gospel suggests thoughts on Death.
ii. Of Death there are three kinds we may consider:
  a. Death of the Body—natural.
  b. Death of the Soul—spiritual.
  c. Death to the World—in religion.

I. Natural Death: (p. 366.)

i. Separation of Body and Soul, as in the widow's son.
ii. The lot of all men, in consequence of the Fall: Hebr. ix. 27.
iii. The only thing certain about death is that it will come. All the rest is most uncertain: how, when or where?
iv. All men instinctively shrink from it:
  a. It is not natural to man, but a punishment.
  b. We may take lawful means to delay it.
v. Yet we must resign ourselves to it, as being the gate to eternal life.
vi. Above all, we must prepare for it, by a good life.
vii. We may lawfully lament the death of friends, yet in resignation.
  a. If a good death, we may even rejoice in their safety.
  b. We must not mourn, as they that have no hope: 1 Thess. iv. 12.

II. Spiritual Death:

i. Loss of the supernatural life of the soul, by mortal sin.
ii. Against this, we must fight with every effort.
iii. Should natural death supervene, eternal death must result.
Hence, this spiritual death is the greatest of all evils.
iv. Seek to undo so great an evil:
  a. In one's self, by humble repentance and amendment.
  b. In others, by prayer, etc. for their conversion. Firm and persevering, as in S. Monica for her son.

III. **Death to the World:**

i. Entering religion, whether the priesthood, or the cloister.

ii. All are called to perfection, though not all to the same degree.

a. There are many mansions on earth, as in Heaven; and,

b. Various degrees of merit here, as of glory hereafter.

iii. In spirituals, as in temporals, some have one calling, some another: *e.g.*

Some marry, others do not.

iv. Each state has its own perfection and happiness.

Outside one's own proper state, there is no real peace.

v. If God calls to a higher state, it is a grace not to be refused.

a. To reject a real vocation is sinful and dangerous.

b. It is wrong in parents, to oppose such in their children.

vi. Wrong views on this head, held both inside and outside the Church.

a. Parents and friends are aggrieved.

b. They lament the loss of an "ornament to Society," etc.

vii. Correct such ignorance and prejudice:

a. Never oppose a true and clear vocation.

b. Congratulate yourselves on the honour God herein shows.

c. Look upon it as a means of perfection.

d. More is done by a life of prayer than the world dreams of.

This age of infidelity especially needs it.

viii. Religious Life is thus a blessing to Society, too often ignored and even despised.

Conclusions:

i. *Natural* Death: prepare for it.

ii. *Spiritual* Death: to be avoided at any and every cost.

iii. *Death to the World:* accept it, if called; and never oppose a vocation.

228. HUMAN LIFE.

From the Gospel narrative of a Death, take occasion to consider some questions on Life.

What is Human Life?

i. A certain space of time, measured of God, and allotted to men.

Infancy: Youth: Manhood: Old age.

ii. Though known to God, most uncertain as regards man.

iii. The Time so given is transitory; for,

"Man shall go into the house of his eternity." Eccles. xii. 5.
"We have not here a lasting city." Hebr. xiii. 14.

iv. Time is short:

a. Whether, because our years are few.

b. Or, because ever moving on and never returning, they quickly pass away.

c. Hence, the folly of growing too much attached to the things of time: 1 Cor. vii. 29.

v. The time of Life is filled with many sorrows.

vi. Time is the road to eternity:

a. A two-fold eternity—happy, or miserable.

b. It can be traversed once only, by each one.

vii. Hence, life is compared in Scripture (Wisd. v. 9) to:

A ship, leaving no mark in the waters.
A bird, passing through the air.
A flower, full of beauty and soon fading.
A bubble of air, easily broken.

viii. It is a river flowing to the very feet of God.

a. Eternal, unchanging, He sees the river of time pass before Him.

b. On its bosom, men sail down to salvation, or damnation.

ix. Hence, Life is truly an exile, a prison, a sojourn in a foreign land.

"Temporal life compared to eternal Life is rather to be called death than life."—*S. Greg.*

x. Yet however brief, it is the germ of immortality. Hence to be prized, and used to the best advantage.

Why is Life given?

i. Not for pleasure merely, nor for wealth, still less for sin.

ii. But as a preparation for eternity, and a means to salvation. For,

a. It is a time of probation, labour, and sowing.

b. A time of expectation, before the coming of the bridegroom: Lke. xii. 35.

iii. Life is a time of war, to be followed by triumph.

iv. Life is the time for Mercy, to be followed by the reign of Justice.

"Now is the acceptable time . . . the day of salvation." 2 Cor. vi. 2.

v. Time most precious, wherein to purchase Heaven.*

a. Our trials may now merit exceeding great glory: Rom. viii. 18: 2 Cor. iv. 17.

b. What would the Blessed give, or the Lost, for one hour of life!

Our use of Life.

i. Let our days be full days: Ps. lxxii. 10.

a. Through the use of prayer and the sacraments.

b. By the works of mercy, spiritual and corporal.

c. By works of penance and reparation.

ii. As to the *Past*, regret your misuse of it.

iii. As to the *Present*, profit by it, as being the only time you can call your own.

iv. As to the *Future*, resolve to utilize it more than the past.

v. Act in this important affair, like

a. The painter, who knows his fortune depends on his picture.

b. The merchant, who seizes every occasion of increasing his wealth.

* "Our whole life should be nothing else but a Lent, to prepare ourselves against the Sabbath of our Death, and the Easter of our Resurrection."—*S. Bernard.*

229. OCCASIONS OF SIN.

"Jesus went into the house of one of the Pharisees." Lke. xiv. 1.

i. Except through motives of zeal, we must avoid the company of the wicked. For,
ii. If we wish to serve God and persevere, we must avoid occasions of sin.

Occasions of Sin:

i. Any external circumstance which tends to lead into sin.
Whether of its own nature, or by reason of our frailty; *e.g.*
ii. Examples of Occasions:
Certain Persons, Places, Books, Plays, etc.
iii. Kinds of Occasions:
a. Proximate, or *Remote.*
b. Absolute, or *Relative.*
c. Necessary, or *Voluntary.*
iv. By divine Law, we must avoid proximate, voluntary occasions.

"If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out." Mth. v. 29.
"If thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off." Mth. v. 30.

To be avoided, because, otherwise,
i. No absolution can be obtained for sin.
a. Whither then can we turn for pardon?
b. We become as captives, desiring freedom, yet refusing to leave prison.
ii. There is no real contrition or sincere conversion.
Remaining in occasions of sin is incompatible with such sincerity.
iii. The sinner will surely relapse.

"He that loveth danger shall perish in it." Ecclus. iii. 27.
"He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled." Ecclus. xiii. 1.
"Can a man walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt?" Prov. vi. 28.

The Devil is like a lion, seeking for prey: 1 Pet. v. 8: and they become his prey, who expose themselves to sin.

iv. Our Lord's precept is clear and decisive: Mth. v. 29 (*supra*).*
Comparisons as to occasions of sin.†

Excuses made:

i. "I am firm and determined now."
a. S. Paul reminds him that stands to beware of falling: 1 Cor. x. 12.
b. Remember S. Peter, Mth. xxvi. 33, 70: David, 2 Kgs. xi.: Solomon, 3 Kgs. xi.

ii. "God will help me."
a. He helped the three children in the furnace: Dan. iii. 50.
b. He protected Daniel among the lions: Dan. vi. 22. But these did not of themselves go into danger.
c. To expose oneself wilfully is to tempt God, who is not mocked: Gal. vi. 7.

iii. "I am converted, and temptations trouble me no longer."
Beware! the enemy is only sleeping, or pretending to sleep.

iv. "To forego this company, etc. would be like tearing my soul from me."
The very thing Our Lord commands, rather than that we offend God.

Lessons:

i. Realize the danger of occasions of sin.
ii. Break generously with them: your very eternity may be at stake.
iii. It is not so hard, as the Devil and passion may suggest.
iv. Prayer and earnestness will obtain you the necessary strength.

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* Among Our Lord's words, one stands out as most remarkable, and as the very foundation of religion—flight from the occasions of sin. Man in the occasion of sin has a choice to make, either to leave it, or be cast into hell.—*S. Bern. Sien.*

† Would any one, with a body made of wax, go near the fire? Would any one sleep near a lion or a dragon? What would happen, if a wolf and a lamb were left together in a stable? Would he not deserve to be robbed, who should openly carry a treasure through a wood, known to be infested by thieves?

230. SERVILE WORKS.

"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath Day?" Lke. xiv. 3.

i. God, the author of time, reserves some for Himself—the Sabbath or Sunday.

ii. In the Old Law, servile work was forbidden on the Sabbath: Ex. xx. 10.

iii. In the New Law, the Sabbath is replaced by the Sunday; and
  a. The principle of rest holds then.
  b. It likewise holds for holidays of obligation.

iv. Consider now this matter, too often neglected.

Works are divided by theologians into three classes, viz.:

i. *Liberal*, which exercise the mind rather than the body: *e.g.*
  a. Study, drawing, teaching.
  b. Lawful, whether done for pay or not.

ii. *Servile*, in which the body is engaged more than the mind: *e.g.*
  a. Labourer's work, digging, serving, baking.
  b. Forbidden, whether done for pay or not, or as mere occupation.

iii. *Common*, done equally by all classes of persons: *e.g.*
  a. Travelling, sailing, games.
  b. Permitted or tolerated, if Mass be heard.
    Unless accompanied by labour, scandal, etc.

Motives for resting from servile work:

i. Not for mere pleasure's sake, or idleness.
  Yet this view is becoming daily more common!

ii. It is the Lord's Day; hence we must rest, to have time for
  a. Prayer:
    1. A most suitable exercise for Sunday.
    2. Holy Mass, the highest form of prayer.

3. Evening Service (Benediction, etc.).
4. Private Devotions, at home.

b. Sacraments:

1. Penance and Holy Eucharist, especially.
2. With more leisure and care, than during the week.
3. Spiritual Communion.

c. Instruction:

1. Wilful ignorance of Religion, a sin against Faith.

   How great is this ignorance nowadays!

2. Hence the duty of
   - *α.* Hearing Sermons and Instructions.
   - *β.* Attending Sunday School and Benediction.
   - *γ.* Reading good books.
3. Responsibility of parents in these matters.

Reasons, justifying servile work, if Mass be heard, when possible:

i. *Necessity*, which knows no law: *e.g.*
   To prepare food for man or beast: Mth. xii. 1.
   To remedy a sudden accident: Mth. xii. 11.
   To avoid some heavy loss.

ii. *Charity*, the end of the Law: *e.g.*
   To attend the sick and dying.
   To assist the poor, without pay.

iii. *Piety*, in the service of God: *e.g.*
   To adorn the Church for a festival.

Without such excuses, Servile Work desecrates the Sunday:

i. *Mortal* Sin,
   a. If it be really laborious; or,
   b. If done for a notable time (say, two hours).

ii. *Venial* Sin,
   If for a short time, or with some fair reason.

231. THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

"What think you of Christ?" Mth. xxii. 42.

i. The Pharisees tempting Our Lord, He took occasion to instruct them.
ii. They said He was Son of David, *i.e.* man only.
iii. He reminded them He is God also.
iv. Denial of our Lord's divinity common nowadays—Unitarianism.

See therefore the grounds on which the dogma rests.

Jesus Christ truly God;

I. *Scripture* declares the Messiah to be

"Emmanuel," God with us. Is. vii. 14.
"God, the Mighty." Is. ix. 6.
"The Lord, our just one." Jer. xxiii. 6.
"God Himself." Is. xxxv. 4.

II. *Prophecies* of the Messiah fulfilled in Christ:

i. His birth of the race of David: 2 Kgs. vii. 12: Mth xx. 30.
ii. His birth from a virgin-mother: Is. vii. 14: Mth. i. 25.
iii. His birth in Bethlehem: Mich. v. 2: Mth. ii. 1.
iv. The flight into Egypt: Osee xi. 1: Mth. ii. 14.
v. His resurrection from the dead: Ps. xv. 10: Mth. xxviii. 6.

III. The *Father* gives testimony:

i. At Our Lord's baptism: Mth. iii. 17.
ii. At His Transfiguration: Mth. xvii. 5.

IV. *Our Lord's* testimony of Himself:

i. His *Words:*

"I and the Father are one." Jn. x. 30.
"The Father is in Me, and I in the Father." Jn. x. 38.
"He that seeth Me seeth the Father also." Jn. xiv. 9.

The truth of these words is confirmed by:

ii. His *Miracles*, never denied: *e.g.*
The change of water into wine: Jn. ii. 9.
Feeding the multitudes: Mth. xv. 37.
Healing the sick: Mth. xiv. 36: Mrk. vii. 35: Lke. v. 13.
Raising the dead, especially Himself: Jn. xi. 44: Mth. xxviii.

iii. His *Prophecies* of the future known only to God: *e.g.*
The Betrayal by Judas: Mrk. xiv. 18.
The Denial by Peter: Mth. xxvi. 34.
The manner of His Death: Mth. xxii. 19: Mrk. x. 34.
The Destruction of the Temple: Mth. xxiv. 2.

iv. His *Death* itself:
Condemned for claiming to be the Son of God: Mth. xxvi. 66.

V. The *Apostles* give testimony:

i. Their *Words* and *Teaching:*

"Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Mth. xvi. 16.
"In the beginning . . . the Word was God." Jn. i. 1.
"Christ . . . God blessed for ever." Rom. ix. 5.
"Let all the angels of God adore Him." Hebr. i. 6.

ii. Their *Miracles*, through His power: *e.g.*
Conversion of 3,000 by S. Peter: Acts ii. 41.
Healing the sick: Acts iii. 6: v. 15.
The conversion of the world.

VI. The *Church's* teaching: *e.g.*

i. The form of Baptism.

ii. The Creeds and Symbols of Faith.

iii. The condemnation of Arius: A.D. 325.

Lessons:

i. Adoration and love due to Jesus Christ, as God.

ii. His presence in the Blessed Sacrament demands the same.
Recognize these duties in thought, word and act.

232. THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST.

"Whose Son is He? They say to Him: David's." Mth. xxii. 42.

i. These words show forth the Humanity of Christ, Our Lord.
   a. He came of the royal race of David.
   b. Born of a human Mother, in human form.

ii. Thus must we believe not only that Christ is God, but also that

Christ is truly Man:

From the time of His Incarnation only, being God from eternity.

i. Having a BODY:
   a. Real human flesh, mangled in His Passion and Death.
   b. Real human blood, shed amid His sufferings.
   c. Members of the body, pierced on the Cross.
   d. Like ours:
      1. Not a new creation, or a new type: but,
      2. Flesh and blood of Adam, as in each of us.
      3. Most perfect in organization, yet passible and mortal; but,
      4. Not affected by concupiscence.

ii. Having a SOUL:
   a. Most beautiful and perfect.
   b. Overflowing with grace, and adorned with every virtue.
   c. Like ours:
      1. Real human *Intellect:*
         α. In all but infinite perfection.
         β. Not affected by the Fall.
         γ. Wonderful knowledge, etc. at His very conception.
      2. Real human sensibility and *Memory:*
         α. Of most exquisite capacity.
         β. Feeling sorrow, love, compassion, etc.:
            The agony in the garden: Mth. xxvi. 39.
            His affection for S. John: Jn. xx. 2,

3. Real human *Will:*
   - *a.* Distinct from the Divine Will; yet,
   - *β.* Ever in harmony with It: *e.g.*
     The prayer in the garden: Mth. xxvi. 39.

iii. As with us, Our Lord's death resulted from separation of soul and body: Jn. xix. 30.

Proofs of Our Lord's Humanity:

i. The *Old Testament* declares Him to come of human seed:
   "She shall crush thy head." Gen. iii. 15.
   "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen. xxii. 18: xxvi. 4.

ii. *Prophets* foretold many details of Our Lord's life. Such as could only refer to His Humanity: *e.g.*
   "They gave Me gall for My food . . . and vinegar to drink." Ps. lviii. 22.
   "I have given My body to the strikers." Is. l. 6.

iii. The *New Testament* declares the Humanity.
   "The Word was made Flesh." Jn. i. 14.
   "See My hands and feet: handle and see." Lke. xxiv. 39.

iv. The *Church* teaches it:
   Condemning the Monophysites in the Cl. of Chalcedon, A.D. 451.

v. *Reason* itself requires it:
   - *a.* As human nature sinned, so must human nature atone.
   - *b.* Yet Christ, if not truly man, could not have suffered.
     Then, we should not have been redeemed!

Thus is Jesus Christ both God and Man, by the Hypostatic Union of Divinity and Humanity, in the one Person of the Son of God.

i. A chief exhibition of God's wondrous love for man.

ii. Seek to increase your knowledge and love of this great mystery.

iii. Jesus is truly present in His Humanity also on our altars.

iv. To Him therein present your human sorrows and trials. With personal experience of them, He can sympathize with you.

233. SLOTH.

"They brought to Him one sick of the palsy." Mth. ix. 2.

i. Paralysis is in several ways a type of sloth. *A Lap. in loc.*

ii. Sloth, spiritual or corporal, worthy of serious consideration.

Sloth:

i. An inordinate love of ease, a langour of soul and body.

ii. A passion most dangerous to salvation; for,

a. All virtue implies and requires effort: *e.g.*

b. But sloth is the very opposite of effort, and cannot make it.

c. Hence the difficulty of overcoming it: hence too its danger.

iii. Recognized in:

a. Indifference.

1. Easy-going disposition, which nothing disturbs.

2. Warnings and reproof have no effect.

b. Want of perseverance:

Beginning many things, continuing none.

c. Sadness and low spirits; or,

d. Dissipation, or work that is useless and without profit.

e. Seeking ease, rest and comfort.

"Go to the ant, O sluggard, and consider her ways." Prov. vi. 6.

f. Procrastination, "the thief of time."

The five foolish Virgins: Mth. xxv. 3.

Coming late to Service, Easter duty, etc.

Going late to work. (What of restitution?)

g. Neglect of the duties of one's state.

The slothful servant: Mth. xxv. 18.

Wasting time in useless visits, reading, etc.

h. Loquacity: 1 Tim. v. 13.

iv. A capital sin, as cause of many others:

"Idleness hath taught much evil." Ecclus. xxxiii. 29.
"The mother of every vice."

a. Aversion to duty, because of the effort duty implies.

b. Inconstancy, and tepidity of soul.

So difficult to cure, and so hateful to God: Apoc. iii. 16.

c. Impurity.*

d. Temptations, especially to despair.

The Bird and the Devil.†

e. Injury even to health of mind and body.

f. Loss of time and merit here, of glory hereafter.

"When steeped in sloth, the mind rusts." *S. Antony.*

g. Want of method and order.

Resolution to remedy all this, by

i. Strengthening God's love in the heart.
ii. Seeking divine courage, in prayer and the sacraments
iii. Reading the lives of Christ and His Saints.

S. Alphonsus' vow never to lose a moment of time!

"What so many have done, canst thou not do, my soul?" *S. Aug.*

iv. Remembering the account we must give in death.
v. Thinking of Heaven, the reward of our efforts: Mth. xi. 12.

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* S. Augustine, withdrawn early from school, through his father's inability to pay for his education, fell into sloth and indolence, whence arose those temptations and disorders, which filled so many years of his after-life.—*His Life:* Aug. 28.

† A bird will not build its nest, nor even alight on the arms of a windmill, so long as they are in motion; so the devil can find no rest, no power over those who are busy and occupied, but only over the lazy and idle; for, when the mind is pre-engaged, there is no room for temptation to enter in.—*Mansi.*

234. INDULGENCES.

i. Bodily diseases are often the punishment of sin.
ii. In the case of the paralytic, Our Lord
  a. First remitted him the guilt of sin.
  b. Then healed his bodily suffering.
iii. Thus does the Church act in regard to Indulgences.

Indulgences:

i. Remission, or forgiving of the temporal punishment due to sin.
ii. Of various kinds: *e.g.*
  a. Plenary: entire blotting out of all punishment due.
  b. Partial: remission of a portion only.
  c. Local: attached to a place: *e.g.* visiting a Church.
  d. Real: applied to things: *e.g.* Rosary beads.
  e. Personal: granted to persons, confraternities.
iii. General conditions for gaining them.
  a. Membership of the Church.
  b. Intention to gain them.
  c. State of grace, in those who benefit by them.
  d. Performance of the works prescribed.
iv. Application of them: either
  a. To the person gaining them: or,
  b. To the souls in Purgatory, by way of suffrage, if
    1. Made applicable to them by ecclesiastical authority, and
    2. He choose so to apply them.
v. Thus Indulgences are in no sense a permission to commit sin!
vi. Granted from the treasury of the Church, viz.:
    1. The infinite merits of Our Lord's Passion.
    2. The wondrous merits of His sinless Mother.
    3. The superabundant satisfactions of the Saints.

a. By virtue of the Communion of Saints.
b. To promote good works, by the offer of reward.
c. To give honour to God, encouraging a fear of sin.
d. To secure the greater good of souls, through the practice of virtue.

vii. Given through the Church, on the authority of Christ Himself: Mth. xvi. 19.

viii. A remission of temporal punishment.
a. All sin implies
1. *Guilt*, to be forgiven.
2. *Punishment*, to be borne here or hereafter.
b. God often remits sin, without its penalty: *e.g.*
Adam and Eve pardoned, yet condemned to sorrows: Gen. iii.
David forgiven, but punished: 2 Kgs. xii. 14
c. The punishment of sin may be
1. *Eternal:* remitted by Confession, or perfect Contrition.
2. *Temporal:* remitted, *e.g.* through Indulgences.

ix. After the guilt of sin is pardoned:
a. A first essential for gaining Indulgences.
b. No remission of debt is possible, so long as guilt remains.
As, before healing the paralytic, Our Lord forgave his sins.

Lessons:

i. Gratitude to God and His Church, for the favour of Indulgences.
ii. Try to value them, and to gain them in numbers.*
iii. In the next world, you will find you have gained too few.
iv. Guard against even lesser sins, which accumulate such a debt of temporal punishment.

* The man who gains all the Indulgences within his reach is not far from being a saint; for such practice implies fervour, humility and contrition.—*Faber.*

235. PARABLE OF THE WEDDING GARMENT.

i. The object of this parable is to show
   a. What God has done for us; and,
   b. What we must do in return.
ii. Consider the chief points of the parable.
   The others only serve to adorn or complete the narrative.

Points of the Parable:

THE KING:
   i. God Himself, truly King in His Goodness, Wisdom and Power.
   ii. Very different from kings of earth, so frail, weak and finite.
   iii. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords: 1 Tim. vi. 15. How happy, they who serve Him!

THE MARRIAGE-FEAST:
   i. The Church *Militant*, wherein we find
      a. The spiritual food of grace in abundance.
      b. The Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.
      c. The Sacrifice of the Mass.
      d. Prayer, and the Divine Word.
      e. The examples of Christ and His Saints.
   ii. The Church *Triumphant*, where we shall feast for ever,
      a. On the Beatific vision.
      b. In the joys and love of the Blessed.
   iii. A banquet worthy of God to give.

THE GUESTS:
   i. The Jews, and especially their leaders.
      a. Primarily and peculiarly called of God.
      b. Refusing the invitation; even killing those who brought it.

ii. The Gentiles, called to replace the Jews.
iii. Each individual soul.

THE SERVANTS:

i. The Prophets; the Baptist; the Apostles.
ii. Bishops and Priests of the Church.
iii. Whose duty it is to lead men to God: 2 Tim. iv. 2.
iv. Whose voice and invitation we must heed: Lke. x. 16.

THE ENTRANCE OF THE KING.

i. Christ Our Lord coming at the last day.
King of the living and the dead, to whom all judgment is given: Jn. v. 22.
ii. Who will meet His guests, and examine all.
iii. God, at the death-bed of each one.

THE GUEST WITHOUT THE WEDDING GARMENT.

i. Every Christian deprived of divine grace.
ii. Members of the Church, having Faith, but not Charity. For,
iii. The Wedding Garment is
a. Grace, bestowed in Baptism, or regained in Penance.
The Royal Present.*
b. A holy life, full of good works and merit.

THE EXTERIOR DARKNESS.

i. Outside the banqueting-hall.†
ii. Eternal damnation in Hell.

Lessons:

i. Having received the wedding garment of grace, preserve it unspotted.
ii. All are called to the banquet in Heaven, though few only accept!

* In the East, a King, on sending an invitation, sent the guest garments to fit him to appear in the royal presence: to come, then, without them was an insult—God gives us the garment of grace, without which we may not appear before Him.

† Marriages and banquets among Orientals used to be held at night, hence anyone expelled therefrom was cast into the cold and darkness of night.

236. FEWNESS OF THE ELECT.

"Many are called, but few are chosen." Mth. xxii. 14.

i. These words should inspire great awe and fear. For,
ii. Many hold the number of the lost to exceed that of the saved;
(Though this is not the only view taken of the subject.)
iii. No one knows among which he may finally be placed.

Emblems of this Fewness:

i. The *Deluge:* Gen. vii.
  a. Noah and his family alone of the human race escaped.
  b. The world is inundated with crime and consequent punishment.
ii. *Lot:* Gen. xix.
  a. He, with wife and daughters, alone escaped from Sodom.
  b. The world is like Sodom; most of the lost are lost through lust.
iii. The *Entrance into Cana:* Numb. xiv.
  a. Of 600,000, only 2 reached the promised land.
  b. A type of Heaven, whither few do enter.
iv. The *Ruin of Damascus*, wherein the saved are likened to
  a. The gleanings in the harvest field: Is. xvii. 5.
  b. The few grapes left after the vintage: *Ibid.* 6.

Fewness of the Elect:

i. The greater number of men are Infidels, Turks, Heretics.
ii. Of Catholics, some hold the majority are saved: for,
  a. Most children die baptized.
  b. Most adults receive the last Sacraments.
  c. Only one of the guests in the parable was cast out.
iii. But reason and authority hold the contrary as to Christian adults.
  a. Consider the Emblems, above.

b. The greater number of Christians live in mortal sin.

As they live, so, generally, do they die.

c. Many refuse to overcome their sinful habits.

d. Many live in utter indifference to religion.

e. Many live in injustice and neglect of restitution.

f. Real purpose of amendment is difficult, and many deceive themselves.

1. This is especially true in sickness and death.
2. Many confessions of sinners in death are worse than in life.

g. Many fall, even after Confession made in danger of death.

h. Numbers die without the Sacraments (battles, accidents, etc.).

i. Many receive them unworthily.

Few Confessions are sincere, when made only at death.

j. Salvation is a work above the powers of nature.

1. Now, man is much weakened by sin.
2. In death, after a life of sin, he has not strength to resist.
3. Thus salvation becomes most difficult.

iv. Scripture seems to suggest it:

"Strait is the way . . . and few there are that find it." Mth. vii. 14.

v. Many of the Fathers hold the same: *e.g.* S. John Chrysostom:* S. Augustine: S. Gregory.

Lessons:

i. See here reason to fear, and to work out salvation in trembling: Phil. ii. 12.

ii. Examine your conscience as to its present state.

iii. Strive to make sure your calling and election: 2 Pet. i. 10.

iv. Remember you have but one soul:

If that be saved, all is saved: if lost, all is lost.

* "How many, think you, will be saved of this city of Antioch? It is an unpleasant thing, but say it I must: of the 100,000 and more inhabitants of Antioch, scarce 100 will be saved, and even of those I have my doubts."—*S. John Chrysostom.*

237. THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL.

i. God is infinite in Wisdom, Goodness and Power.
ii. We might therefore expect to find the universe free from evil.
iii. Yet the world is full of it:
  a. *Moral* evil: sin, and
  b. *Physical* evil: sufferings of every kind.
    Example of the ruler's son; and our own experience.
iv. This existence of evil, an objection against God, worth considering.

Moral Evil:

i. Essentially connected with the possession of free-will by man.
  a. God created him free, and will not hinder even sinful acts.
  b. If he were not free, he would be unable to choose, and so to merit.
ii. Thus, God is not the cause of moral evil.
  a. To have free-will, even with the power to sin, is a good.
  b. It makes us like to God, and offers Him higher homage than the brutes can.
iii. God *permits evil*, which is indeed a mystery.
  a. Yet we know God is all sanctity, and forbids all sin, and,
  b. The divine attributes and the existence of sin cannot be shown to be contradictory.
iv. God *wills good*, though permitting evil, not forcing our will.
  a. If we avoid sin, He will reward us.
  b. If we commit it, He will punish.
v. God draws good out of evil.
    Even as the bee makes honey from poisonous flowers.
    Example of the history of Joseph: Gen. l. 20.

Physical Evil:

i. The consequence and punishment of moral evil:
  a. Through sin, even the material world became tainted: Gen. iii. 17.

b. Sufferings of mind and body were the result.
How great then the malice of sin before God!

ii. God is not bound to do for creatures all the good He can.

iii. Nor is He bound to give them more than He has.
Had He bestowed more, more might still be asked.

iv. Good often comes from physical evil: *e.g.*

a. Suffering patiently borne is meritorious.

1. Hence the just always have their share of sorrow.

2. Yet we shall not be tried beyond endurance: 1 Cor. x. 13.
The potter does not leave his vessels too long in the fire, lest they crack.

3. God acts, as a physician with his patients: To those he has hopes of he gives bitter medicines.

b. Suffering is a means of expiating sin:

1. Sin must be atoned for, here or hereafter.

2. It is easier and more effectual now, than in Purgatory.

c. It detaches the heart from things of earth.
Example of holy Job: ii.

d. In all that befalls us, God wills our good.
The sale of Joseph brought him honour and power: Gen. xli. 40.
The captivity of the Jews spread the knowledge of God: Tob. xiii. 4.
The expulsion of Religious Orders christianizes the lands of exile.

e. Many owe their conversion to their trials:
S. Norbert, and the thunderbolt: June 6.

v. Physical evil is thus not essentially evil, and is not from God.

Conclusion:

i. Though evil be a mystery, let it not make us rebel against God.

ii. The mystery will be cleared up, and God's ways justified of men.

iii. Faith in a future life helps to explain the difficulty.

iv. Resignation in trials will be our best support therein.

238. VENIAL SIN.

"The fever left him." Jn. iv. 52.

i. Fever may be considered as typical of venial sin. For, What fever does in the body, venial sin does in the soul.

ii. Consideration of the evil of Venial Sin very salutary.

Venial Sin:

i. An offence which does not kill the soul, yet displeases God, and often leads to mortal sin.

ii. After mortal sin, the greatest evil before God.

iii. Hence we may never commit venial sin, for any good whatever: Rom. iii. 8.

a. Not, to convert the world.

b. Not, to extinguish the flames of Hell!

iv. Examples of venial sin:

a. Murmuring against superiors.

b. Laughing and talking in Church.

c. Wilful distractions at prayer.

d. Small thefts, etc.

v. Some are indifferent as to venial sin:

Because they do not realize its malice. Hence reflect, that

Venial Sin displeases God:

i. It breaks His Law, even though in small matter only. As an offence against an infinite God, it is greater than temporal evils.

ii. It dims the beauty of the soul, as fever disfigures the body.

A terrible vision.*

iii. It weakens Faith and the hatred of sin.

"Familiarity breeds contempt."

As bodily ailments injure our strength.

iv. It checks the reception of God's graces.

v. It produces lukewarmness, so hateful to God: Apoc. iii. 16.

vi. God has often punished venial sin, even in this life:
Mary murmuring against Moses: Numb. xii. 10.
The diffidence of Moses: Numb. xx. 12.
The vanity of David: 2 Kgs. xxiv. 15.
Oza, touching the Ark: 1 Par. xiii. 10.
vii. Punishment of venial sin in Purgatory, painful and long.

Venial Sin leads to mortal sin:

"He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little." Ecclus. xix. 1.

i. No number of venial sins, as such, ever constitute a mortal sin.
ii. But fever or wounds unheeded may lead to death.
iii. So, frequent venial sin may gradually lead to spiritual death.
iv. The greatest things oft take their rise from small beginnings: *e.g.*
A river, from a spring.
A tree, from a seed.
Death, from a cold.
v. So, mortal sin often comes from the easy commission of venial sin.
A glance of the eye led David to adultery: 2 Kgs. xi. 2.
History of Judas in the Gospel.
vi. The line of separation between mortal sin and venial is often difficult to define.

Lessons:

i. Realize the evil and danger of venial sin.
ii. See how hateful it is to the God of all Sanctity.
iii. Hence resolve to avoid it in every form.
Pray daily, like S. Philip, that God may guard you against it.

* A great servant of God once prayed that he might be allowed to see his soul as it then appeared before the Divine Majesty. His prayer was heard, and he saw in a vision his soul in which there were a few venial sins; but he immediately prayed that the vision might be removed, as he felt that otherwise he would die of fright.

239. PURGATORY.

' Delivered him to the torturers, until he paid all the debt."
Mth. xviii. 34.

i. The torturers of the parable may represent to us the flames of Purgatory.

ii. Purgatory is a place where souls suffer for a time after death, on account of their sins.

iii. The approach of November justifies meditation on this subject.

Purgatory:

i. A Place:
- *a.* Definite spot beneath the earth: *S. Thos.*
- *b.* But nothing is defined by the Church on this head.
- *c.* Purgatory will cease at the last day.

ii. Souls:
- *a.* Not bodies: these go to the tomb till the Resurrection.
- *b.* Defiled with venial sin, not remitted in life: or,
- *c.* Having punishment still due to forgiven sin.
- *d.* Holy and in union with God, because
  1. They are sure of salvation.
  2. They are now impeccable.
  3. They are resigned to the Divine Will.
- *e.* Enjoying even a certain happiness in these thoughts.

iii. Suffer:
- *a.* Pain of *sense:*
  1. Fire and darkness, as in Hell.
     Hence the petition: *locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis.*
  2. Less than in Hell, because of Hope and Charity.
  3. Greater than any sufferings on earth.
  4. Nothing more defined about these sufferings.
- *b.* Pain of *Loss* of the Beatific Vision.
  1. Their *Faith* realizes the holiness of God and their own guilt.

2. Their *Hope* makes them yearn to be with their Creator.
3. Their *Charity* intensifies their grief for sin, and thirst for Heaven.

c. Intensity:

1. According to the number and guilt of their sins.
2. Diminishing, as the suffrages of the Faithful help them.
3. Always great: hence the Church's zeal in their behalf.

iv. For a time:

a. According to

1. The number and guilt of sins to be atoned for
2. The penances and sufferings borne for them in life.

b. Probably very long: for,

1. Consider the infinite sanctity of God.
2. Revelations to the Saints suggest this.
3. The Church sanctions Masses in perpetuity.
4. Our selfishness leads us to think souls released sooner than they probably are.

c. Yet only for a time, however long, while Hell is eternal.

v. On account of sins:

a. Venial sins unforgiven in life; or,

b. Any sins, forgiven but not atoned for.

Lessons:

i. Realize well all that Purgatory implies.

ii. Resolve to avoid the causes that lead to it: *e.g.* Mortal and venial sin; tepidity; want of self-denial, etc.

iii. Help the souls now suffering; for the sake of

a. God who loves and longs to receive them.

b. The souls themselves, so helpless in their sufferings.

c. Your own souls, gaining merit and mercy thereby.

240. FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

"Forgive . . . from your hearts." Mth. xviii. 35.

i. The spirit of forgiveness is the very spirit of Christianity.
A principle unknown in the pagan world.

ii. If we are true disciples of Christ, we must show this spirit.

Forgiveness of Injuries:

i. Lesson often taught by Our Lord:

"Till seventy times seven times." Mth. xviii. 22.
"Forgive, and you shall be forgiven." Lke. vi. 37.

ii. Example set by Him on the Cross.

"Father, forgive them." Lke. xxiii. 34.

iii. Yet some refuse to pardon even small offences.
Sapricius to S. Nicephorus: Feb. 9.

iv. Unless we forgive, the "Our Father" becomes a mockery on our lips.

"Forgive us . . . *as* we forgive."

v. To be perfect, forgiveness must be
a. Promptly given.
Injuries, like wounds, more easily heal when seen to at once.
b. From the heart (as Our Lord requires in this parable).

vi. To flesh and blood, perhaps, hard; to divine grace easy: for,

"I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." Phil. iv. 13.

Motives:

i. God forgives us, when we humbly repent, and ask His pardon.

ii. It is an absolute condition for obtaining His mercy: Mth. vi. 15.
a. To show the greatness of His favour—pardon of sin.
Which He will not grant, without a condition.

b. To remove our reluctance to forgive, by promising pardon.

c. To maintain Charity, the great precept of the Gospel.

d. To crush our pride, showing how criminal is ill-will.

iii. We are all brothers, having the same Father in Heaven.

Now brothers must love and forgive each other.

iv. The Saints have thus acted:

S. Stephen: Acts vii. 59.

S. Nicephorus: Feb. 9.

S. John Gualbert: Jly. 12.

v. It tends to reconciliation and friendship.

vi. It gives efficacy to prayer.

"If Stephen had not prayed, the Church would not have had Paul." *S. Aug.*

vii. If our neighbour do not seem to deserve pardon, God is worthy that we should grant it for His sake.

viii. Creation around us gives us examples.*

Means to:

i. Meditate on the example of our Lord on the Cross. He prayed *aloud* for His enemies, that we might have His example.

ii. Worthy reception of the Holy Eucharist:

"Two persons united to a third should be united to each other." *S. Cyp.*

iii. Remember the justice of God, and leave the matter with Him.

"Revenge to Me, I will repay, saith the Lord." Rom. xii. 19.

iv. Ever keep the thought of Death before you.

"Remember thy last things, and let enmity cease." Ecclus. xxviii. 6.

* The more we strike (dig) the earth, the more fruitful it is—We cut and prune the vine, and it brings forth more leaves and fruit—The dog will turn, and lick the hand that chastises it—Though the animal is beaten by man, it does not cease to labour for him—We often offend our guardian angels, yet they do not leave our side—Shall *we* then refuse to pardon an injury?

241. FOUNTAINS OF HAPPINESS.

i. Man naturally and necessarily seeks happiness: *e.g.*
   Money-making, for daily needs, or future wants.
   Travelling, for business, health or pleasure.
   Studying, in any branch of learning.
   Even sinning, and breaking God's Law.
ii. Happiness, the problem of the Wise, from the beginning.
   Never solved by them, nor its source ever found.
iii. It needed Divine Wisdom to come and teach us.
   a. Christ laid down eight principles, as sources of happiness: viz.
   b. The eight Beatitudes, subject of to-day's Gospel.

The Beatitudes:

i. Great founts of happiness to men, though paradoxes to the world.
   a. Given in love on the Mount, in the New Law: Mth. v.
   b. As the Commandments were in fear on Sina, in the Old Law: Ex. xx.
ii. Eight in number: viz.
   a. Poverty of spirit:
      1. Detachment from the things of the world.
      2. Like the early Christians: Acts iv. 34.
   b. Meekness:
      1. Preventing or moderating anger.
      2. Moses: Our Lord: S. Francis of Sales.
   c. Mourning:
      1. Sorrow over sin, and the want of love.
      2. Elias: Jeremias: Our Lord, over Jerusalem.
   d. Thirst for Justice:
      1. Yearning for perfection, and the conversion of sinners.
      2. The holy men of old: Holy Simeon: The Saints.

e. Mercifulness:
1. Compassion and sympathy in active form.
2. The Saints relieving all forms of suffering.

f. Cleanness of heart:
1. Purity of mind and body, according to one's state.
2. S. Thomas of Aquin: the Virgins: S. Monica.

g. Peacefulness:
1. The soul at rest with God and man, through subjection of the passions.
2. Our Lord, in the Incarnation: the Popes, as peacemakers.

h. Patience:
1. Amid trials for God, or Religion.
2. Our Lord, in His Passion: The Martyrs and Confessors.

iii. Connected with each other, as links in a chain.
Each being a step towards the greater perfection of the next.

iv. In their perfection, a matter of counsel only: *e.g.*
Not all men are asked to sacrifice their goods. But,

v. To some degree, of precept for all, to the extent of avoiding mortal sin: *e.g.*
All must be so detached from things of earth, as to avoid avarice.

vi. A two-fold blessing on each, temporal and eternal.

vii. Whoso seeks happiness must look for it in these sources.

viii. As their observance languishes or flourishes in the Church, so too does the Church herself.

ix. In revivals of Faith, inspiration is drawn from these, as in the days of S. Francis of Assisi, S. Vincent of Paul, etc.

Learn to appreciate and practise the Beatitudes.

i. Thus have the Saints acted.

ii. Their Feast to-day should recall their example.

iii. Our experience will then be true happiness, here and hereafter.

242. PERSECUTION FOR JUSTICE' SAKE.

i. All Saints' Day commemorates the glory of the Blessed in Heaven.

ii. The practice of the Beatitudes, a chief means by which they gained it.

iii. As we cannot study them all, take the last, on persecution, because:

a. It was the lot of most of them, especially the Martyrs: and,

b. We are all more or less subject to it.

Persecution:

i. From the Latin—to pursue, to follow up.

ii. The trials of any kind that dog our steps through life

Poverty and Want.
Sickness and Suffering.
Annoyances from neighbours.
Opposition to good.
Worry and Anxiety.
Temptation.
The evil tongues of men.

For Justice:

i. When inflicted on us, through hatred of God or Religion; or,

ii. If the result of obedience to the commands of God or His Church; or,

iii. When borne for God's love and in resignation: *e.g.*

iv. They suffer persecution for Justice, who

a. Defend at any cost Catholic faith and virtue.

b. Cling to God and His Law, despite all.

c. Bear reviling, calumny and ill-repute for God.

d. Lay down their lives for His glory.

v. Examples:

Abel from Cain: Gen. iv. 8.
Joseph from his brethren: Gen. xxxvii.
The Apostles: Acts v. 41.
The Martyrs and Confessors.

Blessed: because persecution

i. Helps to detach us from the world, and unite us to God.
ii. Makes us resemble our divine Master.
iii. Is fruitful in results: *e.g.*
Our Lord's Passion brought man's salvation.
S. Stephen's death, Saul's conversion: Acts vii. 59.
iv. Is a means to rapid progress in virtue.
v. Often obtains even the visible protection of God: *e.g.*
S. Martina, amid the flames: Jan. 30.
S. Prisca, the lions at her feet: Jan. 18.
S. Januarius, in the amphitheatre: Sept. 19.
S. Daria, protected by a lion: Oct. 25.

The Kingdom of Heaven: where

i. For tribulation shall be given joy.
ii. For oppression, triumph.
iii. For humiliation, glory.
iv. For temporal death, eternal life.

Lessons:

i. Wherever the Church is persecuted, there she shows vigour and progress.
So with courageous souls within the Church.
ii. S. Francis Borgia said three things would preserve the Jesuit Order:
a. Love of study;
b. Mutual Charity; and,
c. Persecution and opposition (which S. Ignatius had prayed for).
iii. If therefore you have a share in trial, murmur not, but rejoice to be accounted worthy to suffer for Christ.
iv. Fear not persecution, but place your trust in God.
v. Pray for those who persecute you.

"Bless, and curse not." Rom. xii. 14.

243. THE USE OF IMAGES, ETC.

"Whose image . . . is this?" Mth. xxii. 20.

i. Our Lord argues from an image, to the respect due to the one it represents.

ii. The use of images in the Church often misunderstood. Hence a useful subject to study.

Images and Pictures:

i. Prints or paintings, representing some Christian truths, etc.: *e.g.*
   The Nativity of Our Lord.
   The Death of S. Stephen.
   The "Stations" of the Cross.

ii. Honoured by the Church from the beginning.
   a. In the Catacombs (especially, the "Shepherd" and the "Lamb").
   b. Cautiously at first:
      1. Because the heathens little understood them.
      2. Lest persecutors should profane them.

iii. Whatever is holy deserves some degree of veneration.

iv. The world honours its great ones by photographs and paintings.

v. We honour similarly images and statues of Our Lord and His Saints.
   The greater the person, the higher the honour.

vi. With a relative honour only;
   a. Not for their own sakes or intrinsic merit.
   b. But as referring to those we venerate absolutely.
   c. As reminding us of their virtues and good works.
   d. An encouragement for us to imitate them.

vii. God has approved of honour shown to inanimate things: *e.g.*
   Miracle in the prophet's tomb: 4 Kgs. xiii. 21.
   The hem of Our Lord's garment: Mth. ix. 21.
   Cloths from S. Paul's body: Acts xix. 12.

viii. The Church is the guardian of the deposit of Faith:
a. She encourages this reverence and devotion.
b. But will not tolerate excess or error herein.
ix. Truly called "books of the ignorant."
King Bogoris.*
x. The Iconoclasts, 8th c., set themselves against the religious use of pictures and statues, and destroyed them in churches.
Yet rightly understood, honour to such would not be condemned.

Honoured by:

i. Burning lights before them.
ii. Praying before (not to) them.
The "Holy Man of Tours."†
iii. Especially imitating the virtues of those they represent.
The first and really true way of honouring them.

Lessons:

i. Have some pious pictures in your home.
ii. Teach your children to understand and truly venerate them.

---

* King Bogoris (9th c.) asked S. Methodius to paint him such a picture as would inspire terror in all who beheld it. The Saint represented the last Judgment in such a manner, that the King was deeply moved on seeing it, and still more so, when the subject was fully explained to him. He even asked to be instructed in the mysteries of Religion, and received Baptism shortly after.—*Butler.*

† Léon Dupont, known as the "Holy Man of Tours" (ob. 1876), had the greatest devotion to the Holy Face of Christ, a faithful reproduction of the veil of S. Veronica. Before a large picture of it in his room, a lamp was ever burning night and day. God showed His approval of the devotion, by numerous miracles and graces obtained in answer to prayers offered before it.

244. GOD AND CÆSAR.

"To Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; to God the things that are God's." Mth. xxii. 21.

i. God and Cæsar represent the two-fold authority ruling the world.
   a. *Ecclesiastical* power in the Church:
   b. *Civil* power in the State.
ii. Both are from God, hence holy and not opposed.
iii. To each we owe and must pay certain duties: viz.

To Cæsar the things of Cæsar:

i. *Obedience* to civil authorities:
   a. Such is the will of God and the divine precept.
      "Let every soul be subject to higher powers." Rom. xiii. 1.
   b. They are the ministers of God: *v.* 1, 4.
   c. They have authority and power to punish: *v.* 4.
   d. God threatens such as disobey them: *v.* 2.
   e. The right to impose tribute implies subjection.
   f. Christian Charity requires us to honour men, according to their rank and position: *v.* 7.
ii. *Payment* of taxes:
   a. These a state has the right to impose; for,
      1. Its authority extends to all that concerns its general welfare.
      2. The common welfare requires subjects to bear the state burdens.
   b. Hence we are bound to pay them, according to our means.
      "To all men their dues, tribute to whom tribute." *v.* 7.
   c. As a matter of justice and conscience: *v.* 5. Conscience Money.*

To God the things of God:

i. *Internal* Duties: *e.g.*
   a. Faith:
      1. Submission of the Intellect to Revelation.

2. Learning the truths He has taught.
3. Making acts of Faith.

b. Hope:

1. Unshaken trust in God.
2. Proving this confidence by prayer and resignation.
3. Making acts of Hope.

c. Charity:

1. Sincere love of God above all things.
2. Doing all for God through pure intention.
3. Suffering all, rather than offend Him by sin.
4. Including love of our neighbour, for God's sake.

ii. *External* Duties: *e.g.*

a. Daily prayer.

b. Mass on Sundays and Holidays.

1. Highest form of worship of creature to Creator.
2. Hence its obligation by the Church.
3. Under pain of mortal sin.
   Unless excused by valid cause.
4. With all reverence and attention.

c. Frequentation of the Sacraments.

1. Instituted as channels of grace, hence to be used.
2. Once a year at least, as by command of the Church.
3. Oftener, according to her wish, and our own needs.
4. What regrets in death, for negligence in this!

Conclusion: Respect and obey these two Powers. They are as two wheels, conveying souls to Heaven.

* Every year large sums of money are secretly remitted to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, restitution of unpaid taxes, and termed "conscience money."

245. THREE DEGREES OF SPIRITUAL DEATH.

i. We read of only three persons restored to life by Our Lord:
   a. The ruler's daughter: Mth. ix. 25.
   b. The widow's son: Lke. vii. 15.
   c. And Lazarus: Jn. xi. 44.
ii. They typify three states of spiritual death in the soul:

The Ruler's Daughter:

i. Quite a child (12 years old), who had just died.
ii. Our Lord simply took her by the hand, and she arose.
iii. Type of the soul, falling into a first or second mortal sin.
   a. More through weakness than malice.
   b. Easily moved to repentance and sorrow.
   c. Grace needs little effort to lead it back to God.
      Exemplified by Our Lord's simple act, in raising the child.
iv. Yet even one mortal sin may damn a soul for eternity.
   We cannot doubt, but that many are in Hell for a first mortal sin.
v. Hence every mortal sin must be strenuously resisted.
   Especially a first one, which so easily leads to others.

The Widow's Son:

i. A young man, being already carried out to the grave.
ii. In this case, Our Lord
   a. Bade the mother be comforted.
   b. Then went and touched the bier.
   c. Spoke to the dead, and bade him arise.
iii. Type of souls plunged into the habit of sin: *e.g.*
   Drunkenness, impurity, neglect of religion.
iv. Habits of sin strengthen the chains of evil round a soul.
   Soon leading it to total indifference to salvation.

v. Such souls require more powerful grace for repentance.
   a. Exemplified by Our Lord's greater action.
   b. But no such grace is anywhere promised.
vi. With what care therefore must we guard against the habit of any sin—habit so hard to cure.

Lazarus:

i. Already four days in the tomb.
ii. Further outward display on the part of Our Lord:
   a. He has the stone removed from over the tomb.
   b. He wept tears over His friend's death.
   c. He raises His eyes to Heaven, and prays to the Father; and,
   d. With a loud voice, He commands Lazarus to come forth.
iii. Type of a soul hardened in sin:
   a. Seared over, as with wax.
   b. Grace can effect no entrance to it.
   c. Even the faith seems lost.
iv. Here too very efficacious graces are needed for repentance.
   Such graces, however, God has not promised to give.
v. Souls in this state are exposed to the imminent danger of damnation.
   For, even the visible approach of death does not terrify them.
vi. Yet, even here, pardon may be had, and the soul revive.
   We must never therefore despair of any sinner.

Lessons:

i. Though there be degrees in sin, even one mortal sin means death to the soul.
ii. There is no evil so terrible, as that of a soul in mortal sin.
iii. Pray therefore to God to preserve you from so great a danger.
iv. If you do fall into sin, make an act of contrition, and hasten to holy Confession.

246. DEVOTION TO THE SOULS IN PURGATORY.

"Come, lay Thy hand upon her." Mth. ix. 18.

i. However valuable the corporal works of mercy, the spiritual are more so.
   Our Lord ever showed this, throughout His missionary career.
ii. Among spiritual works of mercy is prayer for the dead.
   A practice older than Christianity itself: 2 Mach. xii. 43.
iii. See three motives for this devotion, so appropriate to November:
   Figuratively, taking the dead by the hand, *i.e.* coming to their aid.

I. The glory of God:

i. God longs for the souls in Purgatory to come to Him.
   For Him were they made, and for Him alone, as their end.
ii. Yet God Himself cannot release them from their temporary prison; for,
   His Justice requires full atonement to be made to Him.
iii. But we, by our suffrages, can hasten their release; and
iv. God is thereby intensely glorified:
   a. Crowning His own gifts to those souls.
   b. The Cross of Christ triumphs in them.
   c. The bountiful harvest of the Passion is multiplied in them.
v. Thus is Purgatory a field, white for the harvest of God's glory; and,
   This is one of the highest motives of action we can have.

II. The benefit of the Holy Souls:

i. The souls in Purgatory are still separated from God.
ii. Yet they long for Him with intense yearning.
   Comparison of the meteor.*
iii. But they can do nothing now for their own relief; for,
   a. The time of merit has for them passed away; and
   b. They are therefore helpless amid their pains.

iv. We *can* aid them by our suffrages.
v. What, then, can be a greater charity in us, than
  a. To assist those who cannot assist themselves?
  b. To relieve a neighbour of most grievous torment?
  c. To clothe him with the garment of glory in Heaven?
vi. Illustration of the doctrine of the Communion of Saints.

III. **Our own advantage:**
i. Every good work done for God is meritorious of reward: Mth. x. 42.
ii. Our charity to these souls gains intercessors for us in Heaven; for,
  a. They cannot remain ungrateful for the mercy we show them.
  b. They will repay us by their prayers in return.
iii. When our day of tribulation arrives, God will inspire others to give us their suffrages in like manner: Mth. v. 7.
iv. This charitable practice powerfully influences our spiritual life: *e.g.*
  a. Of its nature, hidden, it leads to the interior spirit.
  b. It produces unselfishness and sympathy.
  c. It inspires the horror and fear of sin.
v. Such advantages, no small help towards avoiding Purgatory ourselves.

Means to help the Holy Souls:
i. Offering for them Mass and Holy Communion.
ii. Gaining Indulgences in their favour.
  Each day of November, choose some soul you will try to relieve.

---

* A meteoric body, flying through space, rushes towards the earth, at a terrific rate, unimpeded till it enters the atmosphere of our planet. Then its motion is checked, and the friction produced raises the body to an intense heat, because of the impetuosity of its flight, and because that flight is resisted by the atmosphere. So, when the soul leaves the body, it finds itself within the circle of God's attraction, impelled towards Him with the utmost violence: but if there be even venial faults upon it, they will act like the atmosphere on the meteor, impeding its union with God, till the soul burns with unsatisfied desires, and all trace of sin is at last purged away.—*Vaughan.*

247. SIGNS PRECEDING THE LAST JUDGMENT.

i. The General Judgment will follow the end of time. The Church, at the end of the Ecclesiastical year, reads us the account of it.

ii. When the last day may come, no one knows: Mth. xxiv. 36.

iii. Yet the Scriptures clearly announce signs that shall precede it.

iv. Consideration of some of them should inspire fear and awe.

Signs of the Last Day.

i. The preaching of the Gospel to the whole world.

"This Gospel shall be preached in the whole world." Mth. xxiv. 14.

a. The New Law is for all nations: Mrk. xvi. 15. While the Mosaic Law was for the Jews only.

b. Not necessary that the Gospel be received by every individual.

c. Sufficient that it be preached, as a testimony throughout the world.

ii. Conversion of the Jews (facilitated by their marvellous preservation).

"I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel." Jer. xxxi. 31.

"At that time shall thy people be saved." Dan. xii. 1.

iii. False prophets shall arise.

"Many false prophets shall rise and shall seduce many." Mth. xxiv. 11.

a. Ministers of Satan, teaching error and false doctrine.

b. Leading many from the truth and the service of God.

iv. Wars, famine and pestilences:

"You shall hear of wars and rumours of wars." Mth. xxiv. 6.
"There shall be pestilences and famines." Mth. xxiv. 7.

Yet will men continue to sin, as before the deluge: Mth. xxiv. 37.

v. Antichrist, "the man of sin," will appear.

a. Probably a Jew, proud, cruel and voluptuous,

b. A sinner and persecutor, claiming divine honour: 2 Thess. ii. 4.
c. Working signs and lying wonders: 2 Thess. ii. 9.
d. Author of a great apostasy from the faith: Dan. vii. 25.
e. Will raise a persecution against the elect; and
f. Will subdue the world, and reign in Jerusalem 3½ years: Dan. vii. 25.

vi. Return of Elias to the earth: Mal. iv. 5.
Preaching faith and repentance—a last grace to men.
vii. Then probably a few years of peace to the Church.
viii. Finally, signs in the Heavens:
a. The Sun will be darkened.
1. Not through the light ceasing; but
2. By densest clouds intercepting its rays: as in
The darkness in Egypt: Ex. x. 22.
The darkness at the Crucifixion: Mth. xxvii. 45.
b. The Moon will refuse its light.
Because dependent on the sun's light for its own.
c. Implying the general disturbance of nature, at the approach of the awful day, that will seal the doom of men.
ix. Well may tribulation and awe seize mankind, especially the wicked, on witnessing such terrible scenes!
x. Then will the dead arise from their graves, and the Son of Man appear to judge them.

Lessons:

i. If such marvels prepare the way, how terrible must the Judgment itself be!
ii. Take to heart the lessons they are intended to teach.
iii. Meditate now on the terrors of that day, and you will not fear it then.*
iv. Such serious thought, a safeguard against sin: Ecclus. vii. 40.

* Ven. Bede tells us that St. Cedda, when he heard the thunders rolling, used to throw himself on the ground, and call on God for mercy; for the howling of the tempest put him in mind of the cries of despair poor sinners will utter at the last day!

248. THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

"Then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man." Mth. xxiv. 30.

i. The Cross of Christ will precede His coming in judgment:
   a. A glory to Himself.
   b. A joy to the Elect.
   c. A terror to the Wicked:
ii. Consider the Cross in this three-fold aspect.

I. A glory to Christ:

i. On the Cross, Our Lord died in ignominy; for,
   a. Crucifixion was a punishment, reserved for slaves and malefactors.
   b. Almost unknown among the Jews, except under foreign yoke.
ii. The punishment was as painful, as it was disgraceful.
   a. Criminals often lingered for days, amid intense suffering.
   b. Our Lord's agonies on the Cross extreme, in mind and body.
iii. Thus was the Cross the humiliation of our Redeemer. The crowning event of a life of ignominy and suffering.
iv. In Christian times, it came to be honoured in the world:
   a. Worn on the person, as a badge.
   b. Planted on Churches and religious buildings.
   c. Used in art, under every form.
   d. Forbidden by Constantine, as an instrument of death.
v. On the Judgment-day, it will appear more brilliant than the sun.
   a. No longer an object of disgrace, but of glory.
   b. A magnificent trophy of Christ, who died on it.
   c. A justification of His sentence on the wicked, who despised it.

II. **A comfort to the Just:**

i. The Cross symbolizes self-denial and the trials of life: Mth. x. 38: xvi. 24.

ii. The Just all have trials to bear: *e.g.* from
   a. God: as in sickness and death.
   b. Devil: as in temptations and delusions.
   c. Man: injustice and persecution.
   d. Nature: storms, events in life.
   e. Themselves: from vanity, etc.

iii. They bore their cross in patience and resignation.
   a. Conformed to their Saviour, bearing it after Him.
   b. Making it even an object of their desires, like S. Andrew.
   c. Proving their love to be most intense and effective.

iv. Hence will the Cross become to them a comfort and a joy. For,
   a. They will see in it the cause of their salvation; and
   b. They will approach it with confidence and yearning.

III. **A terror to the Wicked.**

"These seeing it shall be troubled with terrible fear." Wisd. v. 2.

i. In life, they hated the Cross and all it implies. Pain embittered their hearts, and adversity hardened them.

ii. They denied themselves no pleasure, gratifying every desire.

iii. Perhaps they dishonoured even the Crucifix itself.

iv. How do they now fear the Cross, dazzling in beauty and glory.

v. In awe and terror, they await their doom—eternal separation from God, and from the joys of His Kingdom.

Lessons:

i. At the end of the ecclesiastical year to-day, the Gospel recalls the great event of the end of time —the Cross of Christ in judgment.

ii. Keep this solemn truth ever before your mind: Ecclus. vii. 40.

iii. Accept through life all that the Cross implies. The royal road of the Cross brings peace here, glory hereafter.

iv. Love and honour the Cross, even in its material form, in your homes.

v. Loving the Cross now, you will not fear, but welcome, it at the last.

FINIS.

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